

The Creed of Christ

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The creed of Christ

THE CREED OF CHRIST.

THE CREED OF CHRIST

A Study in the Gospels

By ✓

Rev. Richard Venable Lancaster



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TO THE MEMORY

OF

My Mother,

WHO, BEING A WIDOW,

FILLED A MOTHER'S AND A FATHER'S PLACE

TO ME.

PREFACE.

THE Chinese have a beautiful custom. On their mountain roads, at important turns in the way, or near the hardest places, they erect shelters of rest, where the weary traveller may enjoy the prospect and refresh himself for climbing still further upward.

Something like this is my justification for sending forth this little book. It is not claimed that a new Christ is here set forth, or that startlingly new truths have been discovered concerning the Christ already known. The claim is simply that at a turn in the arduous way I have caught a glimpse of Jesus from what, to me, is a fresh viewpoint. And on the spot I set up this wayside shrine, that others, also, in passing may look and see and be refreshed.

I pray God that this view of Christ may be a

real help to many a weary traveller, and that, seeing him afresh, there may spring up in their hearts a fresh love for him—a love which shall grow until they love him better than they love anything else in the world.

R. V. LANCASTER.

ABINGDON, VA., *July*, 1905.

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INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

CREEDS.

EVERY man has a creed. He may not be able to state it, he may not be willing to state it, but he must believe something, and what he believes will show out in his character. He adopts the creed, and the creed in turn makes him. It is the bony frame about which is builded the spiritual stature of the man; and the finished structure of his moral and religious life shows the curves and angles of the creed on which that life is built.

The creed of a true man will show out in his speech. When such a man deals with high themes every word that he sends forth is chosen because it is fit to carry to men the faith that lives in his heart. His creed may not be a perfect one, it may not be a religious one, but

if he believes it, his system of belief will inevitably manifest itself.

Nor is it a hard task to gather out of the lives and words of men a fair statement of what their real creed is. The creed that we thus construct for any definite man may not accord with the creed which that man professes, but the agreement will be near in proportion as the man is true.

Assuming that the divine Christ was also a sincere man, of simple faith, and that the Gospels are a true record of his life, we have set ourselves the task of gathering together and stating the creed about which was built that matchless character, and under the guidance of which he did his mighty work and spoke his wonderful words.

II.

THE HUMAN MIND IN RELIGIOUS STUDY.

“How readest thou?”—LUKE x. 26.

IT is assumed in this investigation that the four Gospels are a true, though incomplete, record of the life and words of Jesus Christ. His life has been lived. His thought has been expressed. Manifestly, then, nothing that is in my mind, and no attitude of my mind, can change one accomplished fact or spoken word. These are finished results, and the mind should be used in studying them just as it should be used in studying the facts in any department of nature. The geologist does not study the structure of a particular mountain by simply recalling the impressions of his childhood, or by searching his mind to see how he thinks a respectable mountain ought to be constructed. He goes out with pick and hammer to uncover and to break open facts, and as he sees them he

accepts them. In such studies the mind is receptive; and even when the mind is turned in upon itself to study its own construction, it must view the phenomena as objective things, perceiving and recording what it sees.

By this practice since Bacon's time great progress has been made in the knowledge of men and of things, but those most experienced in the application of this principle to the study of nature seem, by a strange inconsistency, most wedded to the opposite plan in the study of religion. They cannot accept certain revealed things as true, because they have an impression in their minds with which these things do not agree! They will accept the facts stored away or expressed in the world of matter, but they will not accept the clearer statements made in the Book, as if God could speak out of a stone, but could not use the language of men.

If a man had skill to express an idea in a painting or in a statue, would it be any strange thing to find that the same man could express the same idea, and even additional ideas, in a book? And should not the book be studied on

the same principle, and with as little prejudice, as the statue? To cover the statue of Laocoon with raiment never so beautiful and modern would certainly obscure the ideas which the ancient artist labored to express. To inject our thoughts into the Gospels is to obscure their teaching. To receive their teaching simply and unchanged is to inform the mind. Let no man be like the anaconda, which eats nothing until he has first covered it with his own saliva.

Much of religious truth is already in our possession. Much lies about us, ready to be gathered up; and doubtless much is travelling towards us, like new stars which burst upon the eye of him who watches the heavens. Our duty is to receive it as it is, endeavoring to understand the terms of the grant which God has made to us, establish our title under him, and then bend every energy to explore the boundless riches of our new possessions. He who exploits a mine grows rich, not by what he puts in, but by what he takes out.

III.

WHY STUDY THE CREED OF CHRIST?

"The people that sat in darkness saw a great light."

MATTHEW iv. 16.

THE creed makes the man, and the creed determines what the man will do. This man is great, and has done great things. Doubtless then he had a great creed. Like forms of belief tend to produce like forms of conduct. Whatever aided in the development of that great character, and at the same time tends to develop and to perpetuate in the world a type of life like the life of Christ is worthy of the study of all mankind. In him the people which sat in darkness have seen a great light.

A sufficient time has elapsed since Jesus lived for us to judge the truth of this statement by what has actually taken place. Some one might claim, however, that what is good in these two thousand years of history might have come if Jesus had never lived, and that when

so many forces are at work, it is unfair to refer to him as the source from which the bright spots that now mark the face of the earth draw their light. But it happens to be true that in those places where Jesus is best known there all blessings most abound, and the human mind is accustomed to think in the following way: when a result follows the presence of a definite force, and when the result clearly follows in proportion as that force is clearly present, and when that result does not appear when that force is absent, then that force is the cause of that result. Our purpose is to show that Jesus has been and is a great light.

Certainly darkness covered the earth when he was born, and such darkness is a thing which, undisturbed, grows denser. At that time—we speak not of the year, but of the century—Greece, so great in literature and art, yet worshipper of gods so base that men would have despised their own gods had these gods been men (Gibbon), had fallen and become a vassal of Rome. Her art had decayed. Her worship and her lust remained. Rome is still armed with power, but toppling because of rank

corruption; woman a chattel, or divorced so readily that a man may have twenty wives before being buried by a woman who has had twenty-one husbands; a Roman senator—the name sounds noble, but this man is so vile and so servile, that he proposes in the Senate a law that all Roman homes be free to Julius Cæsar; Egypt, mighty country of the Pharaohs, has for its last queen the unclean Cleopatra; Gaul and northern Europe is the home of the Druids, and their human sacrifices; Scotland furnishes a race of naked warriors whom some call cannibals; Judea, home of God's ancient worship, has hypocrites for priests and Herod for a king; scarcely has there ever been a darker time, and strange night was this for an exulting song to break forth, "Unto us a child is born, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Mighty God, the Prince of Peace." ¹

How could that age produce a character that has been the despair of all good men of all the ages that have followed? We can duplicate the military heroes of the ancients, or their wealthy men, or their philosophers, but there

¹ Isa. ix. 6.

has been only one Jesus Christ, and he is wonderful.

He is wonderful in :

I. His person and character.

Most of us feel that what the great of earth have been we too might be under similar conditions, but before Jesus we stand abashed. A babe might now be born who, under the tuition of God, could do the work of Moses, but no man can be trained into a state in which it would be lawful for him to say, "Before Abraham was born, I am," ² and "when I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ³

Thoughtful men who do not love him overmuch feel that when Jesus makes high claims and speaks great things, he speaks but fitly and worthily. "I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man" (Napoleon). "He is the purest among the mighty, the mightiest among the pure" (Richter). None like him has yet appeared, nor shall to the end of time.

2. The Method of His Work.

As he was an unusual being, so was the method of his work unusual. He sought not

² John viii. 58.

³ John ix. 5.

wealth in order to be great.⁴ Crœsus—but who is Crœsus, and what was his country and his station? He used not military power to spread his name.⁵ Alexander and Cæsar used this, and men now have to dig into the earth to find vestiges of their broken empires. Jesus used the mighty power of a heavenly life. His use of that life, his interpretation of that life, the life itself, constitute the foundation of an enduring kingdom.⁶

The hostility and indifference of men cannot stand before a love like his. Rome endeavors to crush his followers, but is herself broken as she falls upon that great foundation stone. Next come the Goths and Vandals to sweep clean the earth where Christ is known. They make a mistake in saving some alive. Ulfilas, a slave child, is born in the land of the Goths, and by knowing Jesus becomes the regenerator of the nation that enslaves him. The Scriptures which he translated into the tongue of that mighty people are now our best means of knowing how they spoke, and the religion of Jesus has changed the land of the Goths into

⁴ Matt. iv. 9.

⁵ John xviii. 36.

⁶ John xii. 32.

modern Germany. The Mohammedans, mighty apostles of fire and sword, turned back for the first time before men who worshipped Jesus.

A still more dangerous obstacle arises. Unfaithful friends forget his teaching, and for policy's sake take on heathen forms and customs. Saints made like the Roman gods, and angels, are worshipped more than he. It is very dark again, but the light, though covered, is not extinguished, and presently it flashes out once more in Reformation days. A strange method of work is his, but it counts.

3. The Results.

Take the world as it is to-day. The Christian countries are the bright spots, and those are brightest where most is made of Jesus, and his truth is held in purest form. No nation is looking up unless it has come in contact with him, or has been touched by those who do honor him. Search the islands and the continents, and see if I speak not the simple truth.

Nor is this mere twentieth century progress, though the century be reckoned from him. Contact with trade and power and wealth does not elevate. The slave trade, the whiskey

trade, the ivory trade, the opium trade, the trade in implements of war, have helped none. The Bible which Henry M. Stanley left with King Mtesa, accomplished more than every godless trader that ever put his foot upon the dark continent. That Bible enabled men to see the great light, the light which lightens the nations, and is the glory of his people.⁷ Jesus has made the modern world, and the things which he has done, the impression he has made, are proofs of his divine commission.

A pleasing reflection may be thrown into the form of a question. If an imperfect perception of his truth, and a half-hearted following of Jesus have accomplished for men these wonderful results, what may we not expect when men see clearly, and follow him with all their hearts? "Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end."⁸

Because of what he is, because of what he has done, because of what he yet will do, we should study the faith that moved him, and the purposes that filled his heart. He is great enough to be my Lord. He is kind and humble

⁷ Luke ii. 32.

⁸ Isa. ix. 7.

enough to be my brother. When I make his creed my own, and that creed by living in my heart, has reformed my soul, I shall be like him.

THE CREED OF CHRIST.

THE CREED OF CHRIST.

I.

THE SCRIPTURES.

“Whence then hath this man all these things?”—MATT. xiii. 56.

“And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.”—LUKE iv. 21.

ACCORDING to the Apostle Paul, three sources of religious knowledge are open to ordinary men: the works of nature,¹ the moral constitution of man,² and the sacred Scriptures.³ These fountains feed alike the high and the low. They have given to all men, and they gave to Jesus Christ. The measure that they fill for a man is the measure that he brings.⁴ To Christ they gave abundantly, and to him no one of these fountains was closed.

Over us indeed he had two advantages, a clearer eye, and a higher view-point; yet he, like any other man, could look upon the lilies

¹ Rom. i. 20.

² Rom. ii. 15.

³ Rom. iii. 2.

⁴ Matt. vi. 22, 23.

and the birds, and see his Father's hand at work among them.⁵ He could turn his thought to the constitution of his own mind and heart, and see all that we see of the divine law. And much more could he see, for his self-consciousness went back and took hold of things that he had seen and known and heard of the Father.⁶ Nor was this his only peculiarity. High though his station was — nay, because his station was so high; clear though his vision was — nay, because his vision was so clear, one fact stands out that makes him a man of different faith from us. Mark that fact. Neither in nature, nor in himself did he ever find a truth at variance with the Scriptures of God. The three open volumes told to him the story of a common Author and Ruler, who, being good and filled with knowledge, made every statement in each book in view of what was written in the other two. The foregoing statements may be established in the following way. God makes the lilies grow.⁷ God abode in Jesus.⁸ God speaks in the Scriptures.⁹ Now

⁵ Matt. vii. 26–28.

⁶ Comp. John viii. 38; iii. 32.

⁷ Matt. vi. 28–30.

⁸ John xiv. 10.

⁹ Mark xii. 26, 36.

God is consistent. "If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you?"¹⁰ Small wonder is it, then, that of men that have been born, no one has ever equalled him in large-hearted loyalty to these sacred books.¹¹

His Bible, of course, was our Old Testament, for he quotes from every part into which the books were classed by the Jews of his time, and since his day both Jew and Christian have guarded them against corruption.¹² The man Jesus was brought up in a very humble home, and we do not know what access he had to the Scriptures of God. Possibly the most revered treasure of the house was the sacred rolls of the Book. Possibly he attended the synagogue school. But even if such opportunities were denied him we know that, whether from the lips of his mother, or from public inscriptions, or from the copies stored in the synagogue, somehow he studied at an early age,¹³ and with rare success, the written Word, and stored his memory so well that he could quote the text

¹⁰ Matt. vi. 30.

¹¹ Matt. iv. 4; xxvi. 54; John x. 35.

¹² Luke xxiv. 44 (and quotations.)

¹³ Luke ii. 47.

at will.¹⁴ And so skillful was he and ready that life-long students of the written Word were baffled by the aptness of the quotations which he made.¹⁵

Nor ought this picture of the Son of man bending his mind and heart upon the words of the holy Law to surprise us. The Bible meant a great deal to him. We know how different the page shines one day from what it does on another. For him it shone more brightly every day than it shines for us on the best of the days. He loved the Scriptures, and the light which they gave back as he gazed upon them must have been entrancing.¹⁶ Nor was it a mere feast of the heart, his mind was enlarged to grasp the soul of every word,¹⁷ and type,¹⁸ and figure.¹⁹ Certain it is that he saw deeper than the people of his day ever did. "Ye have heard." . . . "But I say."²⁰ The teachers of his time saw a law of external observances, touching only the outward man. Jesus saw a law that reached to the innermost springs of

¹⁴ Matt. iv. 1-10 (and numerous other places).

¹⁵ Mark xii. 34; Luke xx. 40. ¹⁶ John v. 39; Luke xxiv. 27.

¹⁷ John x. 36. ¹⁸ John i. 51; iii. 14. ¹⁹ Matt. v. 3-10.

²⁰ Matt. v. 21-43; Luke v. 1-10.

thought and action.²¹ The people of his day, confused by the composite picture of the Messiah's kingdom, and led by natural impulses to seek money and place and worldly profit, were looking for a king who would bring all these things to them.²² He, like John in the Revelation, looked, and instead of a lion saw a lamb, whose gift was his life, and whose glory was a crown of thorns.²³ Other men could find no proof of man's immortality in these pages. Instantly he points to one passage whose deeper meaning embraces that great truth.²⁴

Even his own followers were no better. They at the very last did not understand, could not understand, why shame and death should come to him they loved,²⁵ and one of the tenderest services which he rendered to them at the end of his life is described in these words, "Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures."²⁶ Never was there a sharper contrast than between Jesus and all the men of his day. The teachers, the people, his own followers were hopelessly

²¹ Matt. v. 28; Mark vii. 15. ²² John vi. 15. ²³ Matt. xx. 28.

²⁴ Matt. xxii. 23-32. ²⁵ Matt. xvi. 22; Luke xxiv. 21.

²⁶ Luke xxiv. 45.

bound by the idea of self-interest. The priests must hold their place at all hazard.²⁷ The people will have no Messiah who will not be a worldly king.²⁸ The apostles wish to have the chief positions in his kingdom.²⁹ Jesus sees, sees in the same pages that are open to them, the divine vision of a spiritual kingdom,³⁰ in which money is not the standard of value,³¹ and in which the only highway to glory is the way of unselfish service.³²

The chief point of interest, however, is not what he knew about the Scriptures, for a man may study them for a multitude of reasons, but how that knowledge affected his life. In what attitude did he stand to the writings and to their contents?

I. As to the writings themselves, we note—

(1) He defended their authority. The formalists of his day had accepted traditionary rules of conduct, and substituted them for the plain commands that had been written.³³ They had also passed current among themselves cer-

²⁷ John xi. 48.

²⁸ John vi. 15, 66.

²⁹ Mark ix. 34.

³⁰ John xviii. 36.

³¹ Luke xii. 15.

³² Matt. xx. 26.

³³ Mark vii. 8.

tain traditional methods of interpretation that robbed the truth of half its power.³⁴ Jesus, the simplest mannered man, rebuked with burning zeal the punctilious tither of mint,³⁵ as well as the ones who had made void the commands of God through their tradition.³⁶ The laying of extra burdens on men whom God had made to be free,³⁷ the warping of the sense of the law so as to excuse current practices,³⁸ the emphasizing of outward forms at the expense of the spiritual graces which the Scriptures enjoin,³⁹ all these things are absolutely condemned by him.

The rationalists of his day believed in the present order of affairs, could find no room in a material world for the supernatural.⁴⁰ Angel and spirit and the future life were myths of less enlightened times. While they claimed against the formalists to honor the Scriptures,⁴¹ yet, since the Scriptures were full of stories that ran counter to their beliefs,⁴⁰ of course they must be allowed to select for obedience

³⁴ Matt. xxiii. 16-22. ³⁵ Matt. xxiii. 23, 24. ³⁶ Matt. xv. 6, 7.

³⁷ Matt. xxiii. 4. ³⁸ Mark vii. 10-13. ³⁹ Matt. xxiii. 25, 26.

⁴⁰ Matt. xxii. 23; Acts xxiii. 8.

only the portions that were agreeable to the wisdom of advanced thought. Jesus, the humblest minded of men, found in the same Scriptures that were open to them God and Spirit and eternal life.⁴² To him the miracles of the Old Testament presented no difficulties. He believed the wondrous stories,⁴³ and with two words he laid bare the sources of all intellectual difficulties which proud minded men ever find in the Bible. (a) Either we do not understand the Scriptures, or understanding them, (b) we doubt the power of God. "Is it not for this cause that ye err, that ye know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God?"⁴⁴

(2) He accepts these Scriptures as a sufficient rule of conduct. Twice he gives the great moral law, or its summary, as that which if a man do, he shall enter the life of God,⁴⁵ and when the amiable young man, with simple frankness, claimed to have kept that law and yet to be lacking, Jesus placed upon him a command⁴⁶ which in one moment showed him

⁴¹ Josephus' Antiquities, Bk. xiii., Chap. x., § 6.

⁴² Matt. xxii. 23-32. ⁴³ Matt. x. 15; xii. 40. ⁴⁴ Mark xii. 24.

⁴⁵ Matt. xix. 16-19; Luke x. 25-28. ⁴⁶ Matt. xix. 21, 22.

to be ignorant of what that law really taught when it said, "Thou shalt not covet."⁴⁷ Thus to men under the law he said, "Keep the law and you shall live." No precept does he repeal.⁴⁸ The cry, "Repent,"⁴⁹ simply means, come back to the standard which God has set up. The law is broken, come back and make amends. His great work was simply to help the man who had broken that perfect rule, and had no way to mend it.⁵⁰

(3) He defended the integrity of the Scriptures. Jesus was not a scholar in the modern sense, but he knew a world more about the Word of God and the days of its writing than those who were doctors then, or are doctors now, and he committed himself to the belief that Moses and David and Isaiah and all the prophets produced the books that are accredited to them. Sometimes quotations are made in such a way as not necessarily to imply this. But the references to Moses in John v. 45-47, and to David in Luke xx. 41-44 gain their whole force from the personal relation of these

⁴⁷ Exod. xx. 17.

⁴⁸ Matt. v. 17.

⁴⁹ Matt. iv. 17.

⁵⁰ Luke vii. 41-50.

two men to the writings in question. The reference to Isaiah is distinctly personal in Mark vii. 6. His treatment of the other prophets is implied in Luke xxiv. 27.

Further still, there seems no doubt that in the view of this man the Scriptures of God were not only in their teaching, but in the record of that teaching, without error. Please consider whether a true man could possibly have spoken as he did if this had not been his belief. To say that the smallest Hebrew letter (*jot*), or distinguishing mark of a letter (*tittle*),⁵¹ must stand as firm as the solid earth or arching heavens, to base substantial arguments upon the use of single words, emphasizing when he does it that the Scripture cannot be broken⁵² — to say that a man spake by the Holy Ghost,⁵³ to refer to the Scriptures as a court of final appeal,⁵⁴ as he so often did, could any man have so used these Scriptures if he had believed them partly true and partly false, or if he had believed that God's truth was not the Scriptures, but only contained somewhere

⁵¹ Matt. v. 18.

⁵² John x. 35.

⁵³ Mark xii. 36.

⁵⁴ Matt. xxi. 13; John vi. 45.

within the Scriptures, with no means of our determining where?

2. There is a difference still between what men believe and how men believe. Did this belief in the authority and faultless perfection of Scripture affect practically his life? Three ways appear.

(1) He consistently grounded his teaching in these Scriptures. Knowing much unknown on earth before,⁵⁵ and conscious of his high place among the messengers of God to men,⁵⁶ he still showed the utmost regard for every prophet that had gone before, and declared that he came to pull down no slightest stone which they had placed in God's great temple.⁵⁷ His work was to complete what they had begun. They in dim light had drawn an outline picture. He, with all necessary skill and the light of a perfect knowledge, had come to fill that outline up, and make it the noblest, the clearest, the most beautiful of all God's works. In this sense he would fulfil what they had done.⁵⁸ The whole of the Gospels is an illustration of

⁵⁵ Matt. xi. 27; John xv. 22.

⁵⁶ Matt. xii. 41, 42.

⁵⁷ Matt. v. 19.

⁵⁸ Matt. v. 17.

this building on the work already done by lesser hands, for besides the scriptural coloring and images and illustrations with which his teaching abounds, it will readily occur to the Bible student that in such cases as his synagogue sermon,⁵⁹ his teaching as to the permanence of the marriage tie,⁶⁰ his showing how the men led of God would come to him,⁶¹ his tracing through the whole Scripture the things concerning himself,⁶² — we have proofs of two habits of thought.

(a) He often founded upon a Scripture statement some stately edifice of apparently new truth.

(b) He appealed to the Scriptures as sufficient proof of his statements, and did so in the spirit of one who thought that no better proof could ever be found.

(2) He takes the Scriptures as the rule of his life. This will appear from the following circumstances. At the time of his temptation there were a number of considerations that would have led an ordinary man to yield to the

⁵⁹ Luke iv. 17–21.

⁶⁰ Mark x. 5–9.

⁶¹ John vi. 45.

⁶² Luke xxiv. 27.

suggestions made by the devil. All his physical nature was certainly on the side of his obtaining food, and that in haste. The devil had shown to him an easy and a ready way to supply his wants. Jesus undertook to advance a reason which would silence the devil by showing that it was forever impossible for him, an obedient son, to take the course suggested. The reason given was that across that way the finger of God had written, "Thou shalt not."⁶³ The high-handed and revolutionary measure of cleansing the temple he justifies by an appeal to these same Scriptures,⁶⁴ and to them he appeals to show that his entering into social intercourse with publicans and sinners was right;⁶⁵ that for him to receive the hosannas of the children,⁶⁶ and for his people to do necessary labor upon the Sabbath,⁶⁷ were not sinful. But most striking of all perhaps is the self-restraint which he showed at the time of his arrest. The dark way, with its desertion and pain, had been revealed to him through the study of the prophets.⁶⁸ His disciples know

⁶³ Matt. iv. 3, 4.⁶⁴ Matt. xxi. 13.⁶⁵ Matt. ix. 13.⁶⁶ Matt. xxi. 16.⁶⁷ Luke vi. 3.⁶⁸ Luke xxiv. 44.

not the end, and urge him to turn back from a way that seems so hard.⁶⁹ With what amazing calmness does he assert that he could pray and his Father would at once give him the army of heaven to defend and keep him safe;⁷⁰ but he adds, "How then should the Scripture be fulfilled?"⁷¹ With power to flee, yet bound by a high purpose, and by loyalty to God's revealed will!⁷² How much further could devotion go? It is not intended that the Scriptures held him as they hold a common man whose will is contrary to the commands, but it is held that Jesus, our Saviour, lived in full knowledge of the Scriptures, transgressing their teaching in nothing,⁷³ and leaving undone no duty which they require.⁷⁴ A perfect man, accorded with a perfect law, and freely walked in its light.

(3) He found in the Scriptures the ideal life, and followed it. Early he came to the study of God's Word with the conviction that the Word spoke of him, and showed the way of his going. "I that speak unto thee am he," the

⁶⁹ Matt. xvi. 22. ⁷⁰ Matt. xxvi. 53. ⁷¹ Matt. xxvi. 54.

⁷² John x. 18. ⁷³ John viii. 46. ⁷⁴ Matt. iii. 15; xvii. 24-27.

Messiah.⁷⁵ And who is that? Where does one learn of him? It is all written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms.⁶⁸ Can we conceive the rapture with which a man would dwell upon those glowing pages, while the angel of a deep conviction constantly whispered, "These are they which bear witness of thee?"⁷⁶ It was thus he read, and in the reading saw himself, and followed whithersoever the vision led. Then in the synagogue at Nazareth,⁷⁷ when the people are wondering what great thing their townsman is growing to be, he takes in his hand the prophecy of Isaiah, reads in a way quite strange to them that great passage about the burden-bearer, the preacher, the liberator. His heart swells before the grand picture of what his life will be, and as the people fasten their eyes upon him he exclaims, "To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." From these beginnings he passed on and on, the Messiah conception resting upon him at once as a burden⁷⁸ and as an inspiration.⁷⁹ With conscious pur-

⁷⁵ John iv. 26.⁷⁶ John v. 39.⁷⁷ Luke iv. 16-21.⁷⁸ Luke xii. 50.⁷⁹ John xii. 23.

pose he speaks to the people in parables;⁸⁰ with a like conscious purpose he plans the triumphal entry into Jerusalem.⁸¹ On and on, never for a moment losing sight of what it behooved this Messiah to do or say.⁸² He measured even his expectations from friends⁸³ and enemies⁸⁴ by what the prophets had spoken, for he could trace his footsteps everywhere, learning from Moses and all the prophets the things concerning himself — the Christ — ought he not?⁸⁵ His heart would burn as truly as the hearts of those who heard him, and it is no wonder that he who found so much in these Scriptures loved them with an absorbing passion. In the most intimate of all relations, when in prayer he would speak the things of his heart to the heart of God, he quoted them.⁸⁶ And even at the very end, when after being in exile so long, and was now returning home, he found his mother-tongue, and yielded up his spirit into his Father's hand with a word taken from among the words that his own spirit had given to the world.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ Matt. xiii. 10-15. ⁸¹ Matt. xxi. 1-11. ⁸² John iv. 34.

⁸³ Matt. xxvi. 31. ⁸⁴ Mark ix. 12. ⁸⁵ Luke xxiv. 26, 27.

⁸⁶ John xvii. 12; Matt. xxvii. 46. ⁸⁷ Luke xxiii. 46.

To make an estimate of what these Scriptures really were to him is perhaps impossible for us; to possess a mind that stumbles not at any of the teachings, and a heart that rebels not at any of the commands, is the perfection of Jesus. The best that we can do is to bow humbly before the teachings that seem hard, waiting patiently till our minds have time to grow. Meanwhile we may so fill our hearts with the ideals of life that the Scriptures give, and the gracious promises that in them are made, that our service shall be in full view of what they teach, and we too be able to feel that this duty has come to me, or this joy has filled my heart, because it is so written concerning me,⁸⁸ his child, and the Scripture cannot be broken.⁸⁹ With the Scriptures concerning Jesus, added to the Scriptures which he had and loved, we are rich indeed — rich in light, and in the countless possibilities of the ideal, joyous life which opens to our view. The reason for our poverty lies in our wilful ignorance of what the Scriptures teach, or in our unbelief of that portion of the teachings which to our

⁸⁸ Matt. xxvi. 24; Luke xviii. 31.

⁸⁹ John x. 35.

minds seems clear. Jesus understood and believed his Bible; we do not.

Scholium.—The attitude of the divine Christ toward the Old Testament must settle the attitude of every regenerate man toward that Book. Suppose it be proved that some of the incidents and teachings found in the Old Testament are found also, with slight variations, in the sacred books of Babylon, of India, or of China. This fact could never prove the Bible account to be untrue. And if we are at a loss to know which of the various accounts we ought to accept, the fact that Jesus was not born in Babylon, in India, or in China, but was born in Judea avowedly to meet the prophetic expectations of the Old Testament, and did meet them, must settle forever the transcendent importance of that Book to all whose life is bound up with his life. To such a man the comparative study of the world's religions does not debase the Old Testament to a level with other books. It simply serves to show the approximations and departures which others have made in reference to this, his ultimate standard of belief. For in giving to the world the

knowledge of himself and of things to come, Jesus also adopted and gave this Book concerning the things that had gone before.

II.

GOD.

"The Father is with me."—JOHN xvi. 32.

MANY things may be believed and known *concerning* God, and there are many ways in which one may believe *in* God. This is shown by James when he says, "The demons also believe and shudder."¹ It is in the attitude which is held toward God that we find the difference between the moralist and the religious man. The moralist goes his way, led by considerations of what he is, and of what his place requires, seeking the approval of his own conscience as the highest joy. The religious soul bends before the revelation of a personal will, and finds its strength in communion with that personal God. Jesus Christ was preëminently a religious man, and with his superior ways of finding out, brings to us very clearly the doctrines of God's unity,²

¹ James ii. 19.

² Mark xii. 29.

eternity,³ omnipresence,⁴ omniscience,⁵ omnipotence,⁶ goodness⁷ and justice;⁸ but the most manifest peculiarity of his faith was that GOD IS NEAR.⁹

The tendency of modern thought seems to be away from this notion. When evolution takes any account of God at all, it places him at the beginning of an almost infinite series, too far away to be taken into account, or to be of any practical use. Physical science, if it finds room for him at all, regards him only as a great constitution builder, who, in setting up a universal reign of law, has limited his own freedom. His laws are but chains with which to bind himself, and the cruel machine which he has set up is beyond his own control, so that we are foolish to cry to the God of nature for any help. The higher criticism of the Scriptures accomplishes very much the same thing for us, by cutting out of the Bible all that tells of events above the experience of men now living. It is a little hard to see of what good is a God thus bound and far away, but so

³ John xvii. 24.

⁴ John xiv. 23.

⁵ Matt. vi. 32.

⁶ John x. 29; Matt. xxviii. 18.

⁷ Luke xviii. 19.

⁸ Matt. vii. 2; Luke xvii. 7. ⁹ John viii. 29; xvi. 32.

strong is this tendency that all who wish to appear well informed seem inevitably urged on to push God into the distance.

Granting that there is a God, his attributes might well be what the Scriptures describe, and we may find no difficulty in so thinking. The practical difficulty nowadays is, to rise to the faith of Jesus, to whom God was a present and an efficient help,¹⁰ for having heard a voice at the beginning of his work which showed that there was One just above him who cared for him, and approved of the work which he was doing,¹¹ he seems always to have been strong and happy in that work. Nor was he lonely, though alone; the Father was with him,¹² and to get rid of other company, so that he might have communion with that Father,¹³ was the nearest approach to self-indulgence of which he was guilty, and for this his highest joy he rather robbed the hours of his own rest than the hours which others might with reason claim.¹⁴

This, then, was his faith.

¹⁰ Matt. xii. 28; John v. 19.

¹¹ Matt. iii. 17.

¹² John xvi. 32.

¹³ Matt. xiv. 23.

¹⁴ Luke vi. 12.

1. He believed God to be the actual ruler and inspector of this world. In majesty he sits upon the heavens for a throne,¹⁵ and the earth is his footstool.¹⁶ Out of his generous hand the sunshine and the rain descend to bless even the rebellious and unthankful.¹⁷ All power is his,¹⁸ and the Lord of heaven and earth performs his pleasure and delivers authority and power to whom he will.¹⁹ All living things depend upon his thoughtful care.²⁰ The men of the world he holds responsible for the gifts they have received.²¹ Inspecting every tree of his vineyard, he expects returns proportioned to the care bestowed.²² He also is the one object of worship, to whom men must everywhere bow,²³ and to whom every man whose spirit pities the wasting harvest must cry for laborers to bring in the whitening grain.²⁴ Thus God knows all, rules all, and is so great that all everywhere may worship him and be heard. But this care is not general and indefinite.

¹⁵ Matt. v. 34; xxiii. 22. ¹⁶ Matt. v. 35. ¹⁷ Matt. v. 45.

¹⁸ Matt. xi. 25-27; John x. 29. ¹⁹ John xix. 11.

²⁰ Matt. vi. 26. ²¹ Matt. xxv. 14-30. ²² Luke xiii. 6-9.

²³ John iv. 20-24.

²⁴ Matt. ix. 38.

2. Jesus believed in particular providence. The sun shines, and all who are in the right position may be benefited. If we could conceive the sun as consciously lifting the mists that hang thick above the valleys, intentionally engaged in painting some tiny flower, lovingly caring for each tender plant, and neither by excess of heat, nor by hiding his face too long, allowing the best interests of any creature to suffer — if we could conceive of such a sun, dealing with each with all the care and skill that he gives to all, we should have a much nearer approach to Christ's conception of God's gracious care. Each bird he feeds,²⁵ each lily does he clothe,²⁶ the sparrow, sick or smitten or freezing, and falling to the ground, escapes not his affectionate notice,²⁷ and a man higher and nearer to God than any of these may think of God as numbering and marking the tiniest thing that aids his comfort or adorns his life.²⁸

Not only can God touch the individual, but God must touch every soul of man that enters the kingdom,²⁹ and they enter one by one, each

²⁵ Matt. vi. 26.

²⁶ Matt. vi. 30.

²⁷ Matt. x. 29.

²⁸ Luke xii. 7.

²⁹ John iii. 3.

having had this high transaction for himself.³⁰ This tree bears fruit, and that does not.³¹ This man has revealed to him truth which is hid from other minds, and which he had no means of knowing till God became his teacher.³² Each branch he prunes, lest it be unfruitful through neglect,³³ and if this little one is caught in an evil snare, and this one set the trap, God knows them both, and will arise to avenge the wrong. Then woe, not to the world, but to that individual whom God condemns.³⁴ Jesus did not seem to understand how God could govern the world, and have nothing to do with the parts that make up that world. To him God not only had to do with masses — he ruled and cared for men.³⁵ But higher still in this belief did he go.

3. Jesus believed that God was concerned about him. God had used the individualizing "thou" and he had heard it.³⁶ Nevermore was he alone; the Father was with him, working in what he worked,³⁷ both directing³⁸ and giving power.³⁷ Every miracle was witness to this

³⁰ John vi. 65. ³¹ Luke xiii. 6-9. ³² Matt. xvi. 17.

³³ John xv. 2.

³⁴ Matt. xviii. 6.

³⁵ Luke xxii. 32; John xvii. 9.

³⁶ Mark i. 11.

³⁷ John xiv. 10.

³⁸ John v. 19; xiv. 31.

great fact. He might speak, and men might wonder³⁹ at the unseen power which accompanied his words. They attempted unsuccessfully to explain the strange phenomenon,⁴⁰ but Jesus made it plain when he said it was simply the finger of God.⁴¹ "The Father hath sent me into the world";⁴² his Spirit is upon me,⁴³ and "I do always the things that are pleasing to him."⁴⁴ Between him and God there was personal communion and intercourse.⁴⁵ God might and did love the world,⁴⁶ but dearer than this God loved him, and let him know it.⁴⁷ "I know that thou hearest me always";⁴⁸ "I abide in his love."⁴⁹ His labor and suffering came not because the Father had forgotten, or was unable to help him. Nay, the bitter cup was held in the same loving hand that had measured to him his greatest blessings, and he braced himself to the supreme sorrow with the reflection, "The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"⁵⁰ Aye, when

³⁹ Luke xi. 14.⁴⁰ Luke xi. 15.⁴¹ Luke xi. 20.⁴² John iii. 17; x. 36; xvii. 18.⁴³ Luke iv. 18.⁴⁴ John viii. 29.⁴⁵ John xvi.⁴⁶ John iii. 16.⁴⁷ John xv. 9.⁴⁸ John xi. 42.⁴⁹ John xv. 10.⁵⁰ John xviii. 11.

God measures out to a special man, if the man have anything of God in his heart, he must drink what the cup holds.

That this was Jesus' faith cannot be more clearly shown than by examining the substance and spirit of his prayers. There were definite things which he wished to do, and he looked up to heaven as he entered on the mighty tasks.⁵¹ His heart was not filled with general aspirations which he could not, or dared not, express, and which he had no reason to believe God would grant if he did express them. He reached up to God for aid in special tasks,⁵² and for the fulfilment of plans and desires which he must leave unrealized.⁵³ The seventeenth chapter of John is a definite prayer whose specific answer is making richer the life of every child of God to-day. Would he have spent whole nights⁵⁴ upon the weary mountain top in prayer if he had not believed that God came down to meet and feed his hungry soul? Would he have told of a poor, sin-burdened man crying out for mercy and going home with

⁵¹ Matt. xiv. 19.

⁵² John xi. 41.

⁵³ John xvii. 20, 24.

⁵⁴ Luke vi. 12.

a sense of infinite peace, if he had not believed it was true? ⁵⁵

If there be hollowness in a man's teaching, it will show in times of danger. But see Jesus when they come for his arrest, and when he knows the end to be near, standing with all the dignity of a God in human form, and asking, "Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels?" ⁵⁶ To one who spoke like this, God surely was not far away. And when previously in the garden he used that strange address, a cry of the child-heart, an address used only then — the word "my" coupled in direct address with the word "Father" — "My Father" ⁵⁷ — I know that he thought God heard those words. So also upon the cross, when he said, "Into thy hands," ⁵⁸ it seems as if he thought he could reach up with his poor hands and touch the hands of the infinite God.

II. Of this article in our Saviour's creed, the nearness of God, we note —

⁵⁵ Luke xviii. 14.

⁵⁶ Matt. xxvi. 53.

⁵⁷ Matt. xxvi. 42.

⁵⁸ Luke xxiii. 46.

1. It was a source of great comfort and strength to him. He is the author of the words, "Yea, Father, for so it seemed well-pleasing in thy sight,"⁵⁹ and this was said in the face of God's inscrutable providence. When the Jews early in his ministry were going about to kill him,⁶⁰ and again when he spoke to his disciples of their leaving him alone to his dread fate,⁶¹ he uses the words which would make any heart stout, "The Father is with me." Herod may seek to kill him, but he knows that to meet the Father's plan, he must work to-day and to-morrow; therefore, no fear comes to his heart.⁶² God, whose eye is on him, is nearer and stronger than Herod. Pilate, armed with Roman might, may boast of authority, and endeavor to disturb the calm prisoner of the gentle eye and voice that stands before him, but Jesus tells the haughty man that even Rome's mighty power would be annulled if God let down his hand between the prisoner and the judge.⁶³

2. He wishes his people to believe as he did

⁵⁹ Matt. xi. 26.

⁶⁰ John viii. 29.

⁶¹ John xvi. 32.

⁶² Luke xiii. 32.

⁶³ John xix. 10, 11.

on this great point. God does hide himself in his works and in the parables of life so that not all are able to find him or to see his hand,⁶⁴ but if one knows Christ and keeps his commandments, he will be taught the language of his providence, and shall even have a special manifestation of God's presence in his heart.⁶⁵ Jude did not understand this, but Jesus says it is true, and he elsewhere asserts that he has indeed manifested God's name to certain chosen ones who had been given unto him.⁶⁶ Moreover, at the tomb of Lazarus, the very purpose of his prayer is declared to be the enlightenment of his friends on this point, "I know that thou hearest me always, but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe."⁶⁷ O Lord, give proof that my work is thy work, that when thy servant speaks the Master hears; and the proof came. Is not every injunction to prayer but evidence of the same desire on his part? "Thy Father seeth in secret;"⁶⁸ ask and he will give⁶⁹ — give daily bread, guidance, forgiveness, deliverance,⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Matt. xiii. 11. ⁶⁵ John xiv. 7-23. ⁶⁶ John xvii. 6.

⁶⁷ John xi. 42. ⁶⁸ Matt. vi. 4. ⁶⁹ Matt. vii. 7; John xv. 16.

⁷⁰ Matt. vi. 9-15.

and if there be any case unprovided for, remember that "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need."⁷¹ Can one get so far away as to be beyond the reach of this, "My Father knoweth"? Here is comfort, courage, peace and hope. In loneliness, when misunderstood, when defamed, when betrayed, when broken-hearted, when bereaved, and we like children are crying in the night, the cry goes not out into earless, heartless space. The Father knoweth and is very near.

This article of faith in the nearness of God has been in the creeds of well-nigh all the great of earth. Men are weak, and they need a strong hand to hold them up and make them stand. Even heathen men have felt the power that comes from a thought like this. Confucius conceived truth to be dear to heaven, and that heaven would preserve him, because he stood so near to truth. Thus in desertion and shame he said, "There is no one that knows me, but there is heaven — that knows me." Certainly, then, faith in the nearness of the living God would add strength to any man. Gideon

⁷¹ Matt. vi. 32.

in his battle cry coupled the sword of God with the weapon which was wielded by his own arm, and every arm that followed him was stronger by reason of that faith. The prophet Elisha, when surrounded by human foes, and when his own friend has lost all faith and hope, could see, and pray that the young man might see, the hosts of God gathered upon the hills to comfort and encourage him. God opened the eyes of the youth, and all his fear departed. Paul, the apostle, pressed well-nigh to crushing, assures us that he could do all things through Christ, and in giving account of his first appearance before the bar of the Cæsar at Rome, when all his friends forsook him, leaving him unaided to face the dread tribunal, he tells us that God stood with him and strengthened him. Martyrs and reformers, whether in prison, at the stake, or on the mountains cold, felt the power and comfort of this same faith. God was near to them, nearest when they were most in need.

As a particle of dust against the world, or a feather in a whirlwind, so is one man against the forces of nature or against the passions of

men, yet with this presence of God in his soul, and this faith that God is near at hand, that same atom may have courage to face the one, and power to rule the other, for men are heroes still when they catch from heaven the voice, "Lo, I am with you always," ⁷² and men are comforted still when they can say, "My Father knoweth," ⁷³ and no burden can crush the man who, in the simplicity of the faith of Jesus, can say, "I am not alone." ⁷⁴

⁷² Matt. xxviii. 20.

⁷³ Matt. vi. 32.

⁷⁴ John xvi. 32.

III.

SATAN.

"I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven."

LUKE x. 18.

CHRIST in this passage names his enemy and tells of a wonderful vision concerning him. Whatever the original occurrence was, the words placed where they are mean that Christ, as he saw his kingdom grow and victories over evil won, saw, as one sees a lightning flash in the heavens, Satan and his kingdom falling to inevitable defeat. Christ and Satan, leaders of two hostile forces, make no truces,¹ and are so related that gain for one means loss to the other.² Christ's kingdom is set up against the kingdom of the Prince of this world, and every follower of Christ is a man snatched by violence from the power of Satan.³ Satan, like some feudal baron,⁴ is not careful what his serfs may think of him so long as the service is rendered and the revenues are

¹ Matt. iv. 8-11.

² John xii. 31-32.

³ Luke xli. 14-23.

⁴ Luke xi. 21.

paid. He may hide himself from view until men come to doubt whether there be such a person or not. They may count themselves "at peace,"⁴ held by circumstances, their own poverty, their weakness, to the soil. Little cares he. So long as they serve, and die as their fathers did, he is satisfied, for their skepticism as to the lord within the castle gates may remove from them an object of hate; as he keeps them poor and weak, his reign is strengthened by their doubts. His sway is maintained by craft as much as by strength. "He is a liar."⁵ And it suits his purpose for men to ridicule his being and attributes. Whom men despise they do not fear. The jests and pictures that make men laugh and hold his being in contempt really serve to throw us off our guard, and make his victories the easier. Who now believes? who now trembles before the assaults of this enemy whom Christ named Satan? Christ doubted not, and Christ laughed not. Satan was his enemy.⁶

I. In him and of him he believed the following:

⁴ Luke xi. 21.

⁵ John viii. 44.

⁶ Matt. xiii. 39.

1. His personality. To Christ Satan was not a mere personification of an evil principle; he was the intelligent being from whom evil arose, and who revelled and ruled among his own ill-shapen offspring. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father thereof."⁷ Nor did he in his views of Satan merely accommodate himself for purposes of teaching to the superstitions of the Jewish people. The whole tone of the record⁸ forbids this view, even if we could suppose a true man to be guilty of such a method. No, Satan was more to him than either of these ideas will allow. Christ addresses him, and is addressed by him.⁹ Christ assigns him powers of rule,¹⁰ desires,¹¹ passions,¹² actions with moral quality,¹² responsibility and condemnation.¹³ These high attributes belong only to persons. These things

⁷ John viii. 44.

⁸ Luke xxii. 31; Matt. x. 1, 8.

⁹ Matt. iv. 1-11.

¹⁰ John xiv. 30.

¹¹ Luke xxi. 31.

¹² John viii. 44.

¹³ John xli. 31; xvi. 11; Matt. xxv. 41.

constitute personality. And therefore, according to the form of the gospel narrative, Satan is just as truly a personal and an active agent as any of the men that are named, and is mentioned oftener than most of them.

2. Satan has high authority and power. He has a kingdom, which he rules and for which he labors.¹⁴ In the sphere of this world that is Christless he is prince,¹⁵ and men serve him. It is in his power to afflict with physical ills,¹⁶ and when permitted by God he can toss and expose to driving winds the children of men as easily as a stalwart man can sift the grains of wheat.¹⁷ A host of evil spirits hear his commands and obey,¹⁸ and men, called his children because they are under his power and are like him, fulfil his desires.¹⁹

3. His character is wholly evil. In fact, one of the names applied to him is the Evil One.²⁰ He is so evil that Jesus, who spake truly even in the epithets which he applied, calls him liar and murderer.¹² He deceives and kills, and is

¹⁴ Luke xi. 18-22. ¹⁵ John xii. 31. ¹⁶ Luke xlii. 16.

¹⁷ Luke xxii. 31.

¹⁸ Matt. xxv. 41.

¹⁹ John viii. 44; Matt. xvi. 23; John xlii. 27.

²⁰ John xvii. 15.

¹² John viii. 44.

the source whence lying and killing spring. He deceives our hearts, and leaves them parched like a desert land that is dead. "Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again."²¹ He deceives our minds, and they wander into darkness, there to become blind, and then to stumble and to fall.²² He deceives the pure, and their innocence perishes. He deceives the strong and young, and they spend their strength in vain pursuits, and having spent all, the famine comes and he leaves them to die.²³ He is the father of lies, hatings and death, and the father of all such as do the things that make for falsehood and death.²⁴ A terrible monster is he, and yet this is Satan in the eye of Christ.

This being his character, it is not surprising that he is represented by Christ as being opposed to him in all things. He would destroy, if possible, what Jesus is doing. Jesus sows good seed, but when it is left exposed for a moment Satan snatches it away,²⁵ or comes in the night time and sows seed of quite another sort, so as to choke or pollute the Master's

²¹ John vi. 13.²² John xii. 35.²³ Luke xv. 14.²⁴ John viii. 44.²⁵ Mark iv. 15.

grain.²⁶ And not content with deeds like these, he rises into bitter enmity against Christ himself. All his minions are against the Son of man.²⁷ Satan himself tries to seduce him,²⁸ and failing, stirs up men with murder in their hearts to try to kill him.²⁹ Then, when the end of his life drew near, the prince of this world came, and Jesus felt his power.³⁰ Thus was Satan evil enough to stand in the way and to oppose the loving Christ.

4. Jesus believed in the ultimate ruin of Satan.³¹ Armed with a power which was God's — so truly God's that he calls it God's finger — Jesus had begun to enter the house of the strong man, and everywhere proved himself stronger than the opposing devil.³² The prince of this world was already condemned,³³ and God's Spirit would prove to the world what Jesus already believed.³⁴ The kingdom of Satan was to him a waning kingdom. While his servants wrought, he was beholding Satan as lightning falling³⁵ ever toward a place and a

²⁶ Matt. xiii. 39.

²⁷ Mark i. 24.

²⁸ Matt. iv. 1-11.

²⁹ John viii. 40, 41.

³⁰ Luke xxii. 53.

³¹ Luke x. 18, 19.

³² Luke xi. 20-22.

³³ John xii. 31.

³⁴ John xvi. 8-11.

³⁵ Luke x. 18.

fire prepared for him and for all those that were his.³⁶ So steadfastly did Jesus believe this that he, conscious of the good beginning and in anticipation of the ultimate triumph, said to his friends, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome."³⁷

II. The Gospels leave no room to doubt that Jesus believed in such a personal devil, with such a character and such a doom. They also let us see some of the effects which this belief had upon his daily life.

1. He was in constant opposition to the powers of evil. The temptation³⁸ showed that there was nothing in common, either in their nature or in their plans, between Jesus and Satan. Christ occupied the position of an invader.³⁹ The temptation may be compared to a preliminary conference, in which Satan used every art in his power to seduce God's lieutenant from his purpose and his allegiance. The result was an open defiance on each side. They both understood that the war would go on,⁴⁰ and Satan learned that this time God had

³⁶ Matt. xxv. 41.

³⁷ John xvi. 33.

³⁸ Matt. iv. 1-11.

³⁹ Luke xi. 22.

⁴⁰ Luke iv. 13.

sent a messenger stronger than he. There was a quality in Jesus' person that seemed to force every demon that came near him to declare his own presence and to acknowledge the power of Christ.⁴¹ Full well do they know that he will drive them out, and with harsh, stern words as to a beast, he silences them.⁴² So unfailing is the opposition that in the parable, when the picture is of things gone wrong, he says, "An enemy hath done this."⁴³

It is not always safe to measure the Spirit of Christ by our spirits, but if it is right to hate evil, he could do even this right thing more perfectly than we, and the zeal which burned in him for his Father's honor,⁴⁴ burned against oppression and evil and found a conspicuous object in this enemy that was doing these things.⁴⁵ We stand in awe and are silent before the passions which filled his heart at the end, when the victory was to cost him so much, and when he succumbed for an hour before the power of darkness.⁴⁵ This time, not by seduction, but by bruising, does the devil try him.

⁴¹ Matt. viii. 29; Mark i. 24, etc.

⁴² Mark i. 25.

⁴³ Mat. xiii. 28.

⁴⁴ John ii. 13-17.

⁴⁵ Luke xxi. 53.

Well do we know that Christ, all through his life, ceased not for a moment to resist evil, and we know that this enemy had much to do with the sad, weary life which he passed on the earth.

2. One other effect of this faith we notice. The known hatred of Satan, the appreciation of his strength, the familiar weakness of his own people, awakened in the breast of Jesus the keenest sympathy for those who would be exposed to the endless attacks of an implacable foe. He knows their danger;⁴⁶ he wishes them to stand.⁴⁷ Christ's experience brings his heart very near to the heart of a tempted man. He therefore instructs them daily to pray for the same strength that sheltered him,⁴⁸ and shows the importance which he attaches to this prayer by using the same petition when at the last he goes into the Father's presence on their behalf.⁴⁹ He descends even into particular cases, and prays for one man who shall be sorely tossed and broken, that his faith may not fail.⁵⁰

Those who stand with Christ and believe

⁴⁶ Matt. xxiv. 24; xxvi. 41.

⁴⁷ John xvii. 11.

⁴⁸ Matt. vi. 13.

⁴⁹ John xvii. 15.

⁵⁰ Luke xxii. 32.

with him should hate where he hated, and surely we have double cause. Satan is the being who came upon the scene when our first father was fresh from God's hand, and living in innocence and joy. He changed that happy world to a world like this, where innocence is not found, and joy seldom comes; and not that only, but when the good God in great compassion sent to us a Saviour to bring us back to the fellowship and peace of the new adoption, Satan, implacable still above all beings, came to seduce our Saviour and to rob the world of its only hope. In this he failed, but he hated still, and at the end of Jesus' life he comes with all his dark power to crush him whom he could not seduce. Hate him? yes, and by God's grace I would love to hate him more. And when, in the end, his fall complete, my ever blessed King shall place his heel upon the serpent's head and bruise it, I want to be there to see the victory and to share the triumph.

IV.

SIN.

“Ye then being evil.”—MATT. vii. 11.

IT is astonishing that upon this article of the creed of Jesus the whole world is not agreed. Jesus knew sin by observation; men know it by hard experience — yet it seemed a more dreadful thing to him than it does to them. This is to be accounted for by the fact that he, being rich in holiness and peace, was better able to measure the misery of those who are too poor and besotted to know their own lack, and by this other fact that he was able in his vision to take in the ultimate condition of a man when sin is finished and the wages are all paid.

Now and then you find a man who, under the teaching of Jesus has been brought around to the view of Jesus; and to a man thus taught, one of the standing marvels is, how men can have any doubt upon this subject. To him it

seems that the fang of the serpent is in the heart of the world. His hope is not in the non-existence of the poison, but in an antidote. The untaught ones, on the other hand, are deceived in two ways. The virus is of so strange a quality that it destroys the edge of suffering; they lose the power to blush. Contrariwise, in some of its most deadly forms, sin actually makes show of perfect health. Like the diseased silk-worm, grown great above its fellows, and whose very size is an indication of approaching dissolution, so the proud, self-righteous, hypocritical man comforts himself with swellings of the heart, which are not signs of life, but of death. It is a mistake to think that the average man is hungry and longing for something holier than his present condition. Often he feels no pain, and often he glories in himself as having need of nothing.

Nor is he left to himself in taking this complacent view. Certain teachers from opposite quarters come to him, and pitching their voices on the same key with his, make him think that already he sings well. The prophet of New-revelation and the prophet of No-revelation

practically agree. The one says, sin has no guilt, for it is a sort of negation at best; the other says, sin has no guilt, for it is only a remnant of mere animal tendencies. The man listens to the so-called Christian Scientist, and learns that if he could only think little enough of sin to think it nothing, all would be well. He then listens to the natural scientist, who tells him that there has been no fall; that man is very praiseworthy for his present condition; and that a slight turn of the wheel of evolution is all that is needed to remove the imperfections of the lower orders of life which still cling to him. Thus do the conclusions of irreligion, no religion and high religion agree.

Sin has all the multitude of forms that may arise from aiming at a wrong object¹ or from aiming awry at an object that is right.² Jesus did not make for us a complete catalogue of sins; but, in a general way, it is impossible to mistake his belief on this great subject.

I. He believed men to be sinners. We prove the truth of this assertion in the following way:

1. Men were not in the moral condition he

¹ Mark xii. 38-40; John v. 44.

² Matt. vi. 5; xv. 7-9.

desired them to be. The first recorded word of his public ministry is the cry, "Repent."³ This word so spoken has no meaning except as a message to those who are perversely out of the way, and Jesus had no right to insult the holy with such an implication. Nor would he have a right to disturb the quiet of the world by such a cry, if all were well. With him the assumption was that men are evil,⁴ and his purpose in coming to the world and living and dying, and sending forth a ministry to men, is thus expressed, "To open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts xxvi. 18.)

Seeking, saving, healing, and these at infinite cost, that was the end of his human existence. "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."⁵ "Himself took our infirmities and bear our diseases."⁶ "For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but

³ Matt. iv. 17. ⁴ Luke xi. 13; Matt. xii. 34; Luke vi. 32-34.

⁵ Luke xix. 10.

⁶ Matt. viii. 17.

to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”⁷

To him there was as much difference as there is to us between an Herodias and a Mary, a Judas and a John, and we can safely challenge the world to show a single instance in which the “world” is set forth other than as an offence to his sense of justice⁸ or as a burden upon his loving heart.⁹

2. The reasons why the world does not meet his view: Men are in darkness; nor is this a mere misfortune, for they love the darkness and what the darkness hides. “This is the judgment, that light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil.”¹⁰ They are in ignorance of God,¹¹ which doubtless should awaken pity; but when they come to see God, they hate him, and hate Christ. “Every one that doeth evil hateth the light.”¹² “Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.”¹³ And they hate his servants because they are different from the world.¹⁴ The wills

⁷ Mark x. 45.

⁸ Matt. xviii. 7.

⁹ John iii. 17.

¹⁰ John iii. 19.

¹¹ Matt. xi. 27.

¹² John iii. 20.

¹³ John xv. 24.

¹⁴ John xv. 19.

of men are averse from God,¹⁵ and they have given their allegiance to God's enemy, the devil, who has come to bear such a relation to men that he may be called their father.¹⁶ And men are like him, and they do his lusts,¹⁷ and these lusts defile.¹⁸

So painful is the truth that men hate God's messenger who declares it. "Me the world hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil."¹⁹ "If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you."²⁰ And so deep-rooted is the disease that, as he points out to Nicodemus,²¹ the very nature of man is wrong and in need of a divine transformation. "Ye must be born anew." No teaching, though the teacher be come from God — no physical wonder, like the restoration to the comparative innocence of childhood, can overcome the inflexible law, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."²²

II. Concerning this condition of men, which brought Christ Jesus into the world, and made

¹⁵ John v. 40.

¹⁶ John viii. 38.

¹⁷ John viii. 44.

¹⁸ Matt. xv. 18-20.

¹⁹ John vii. 7; viii. 40.

²⁰ John xv. 18.

²¹ John iii. 1-14.

²² John iii. 6.

him "a man of sorrows," the following statements seem clear :

1. However the complaint may be defined, he considered the evil to be a quality not of actions only, but of persons. There is something in the tree that determines the character of the fruit.²³ Strong men are usually exact in their speech. To Jesus, men not only did evil things, but were themselves evil,²⁴ blind,²⁵ hypocritical,²⁶ unclean,²⁷ wicked,²⁸ lost.²⁹ Thus, back of the evil deeds, he saw the evil man, and came, not to stop the evil-doing simply, but to save the man.

2. This evil quality attached, not to the body only, but to the spirit. In vain we search for any view of Christ by which a sin may be excused because it is only in the flesh. Evil desires spring from the heart,²⁷ and set on fire even those passions that are called animal. Every temptation is first in the mind, and through the mind, the imagination, does it affect the body.²⁸ It is indeed the attitude of

²³ Matt. vii. 17, 18.

²⁴ Matt. vii. 11; xii. 45.

²⁵ Matt. xv. 14;

²⁶ Matt. xxiii. 13, etc.

²⁷ Matt. xv. 19; John viii. 7. ²⁸ Matt. xiii. 49; v. 28.

²⁹ Matt. xv. 24; Luke xix. 10.

the mind or heart that determines in every case whether an action be good or bad.³⁰ Manifestly, the same bodily action may be either. But evil in the mind's eye will make one see evil,³¹ and evil in the mind's ear will make us hear amiss.³² "Take heed therefore how ye hear."³³

3. The evil quality attaching both to the action and to the person is not a mere absence of good, but a very positive and real thing — so real that it can produce physical effects, disease and death,³⁴ — so real that it can defile the whole man,³⁵ changing the character, not only of that which he produces from within,³⁶ but even the view that he will take of that which appeals to him from without.³⁷

Why not say that good is a mere negation? The absence of evil? Certainly the active power in evil is just as marked as are the active qualities in good. In the parable of Jesus,³⁸ the wolf has qualities of its own — cruelty and

³⁰ Matt. vi. 5; xii. 34.

³¹ Matt. vi. 23.

³² Mark iv. 12; John viii. 43.

³³ Luke viii. 18.

³⁴ John v. 14; viii. 24; Luke xiii. 3.

³⁵ Mark vii. 23.

³⁶ Luke vi. 45.

³⁷ Matt. vi. 23; xx. 15.

³⁸ Luke x. 3; Matt. vii. 15.

thirst for blood. He is not simply not a lamb, he is a wolf. The characteristics of the tares are just as distinct as the characteristics of the wheat. The tares are not simply not wheat, they have harmful qualities of their own.³⁹ Avarice is more active than generosity, and hate burns as truly as does love. The sunshine and rain that make for health are no more real than are the thousand foes that threaten to devour every living thing. Darkness might be described as the absence of light, and death as the absence of life, but the mighty revolution which hides the sun and produces the one, and the dread pestilence that produces the other are very real things indeed. In this sense, lust and avarice and hate are among the facts of the world; great, devouring passions which grow by that on which they feed — the lives and souls of men. That which changes men to devils, and teaches men to do the devil's work,⁴⁰ cannot be a mere negation. That which compassed the death of Jesus Christ,⁴¹ we cannot call unreal.

Certainly Jesus believed himself to be fight-

³⁹ Matt. xiii. 41.

⁴⁰ John viii. 44.

⁴¹ Acts ii. 23.

ing a real battle with real foes. The judgment, or a part in a deathless feud, was of old upon him,⁴² and he lived conscious of the opposition that was felt and shown, with increasing force, as he, with set face, went on.⁴³ Perhaps a missionary in a heathen land can best know the mingled feelings of love,⁴⁴ of self-devotion,⁴⁵ of pity even to tears,⁴⁶ and yet of almost defiant complaint against wilful injustice,⁴⁷ and a certain looking-for of a glorious vindication in the end,⁴⁸ which filled the heart of Jesus.

If men had been holy, none of the work of Jesus would have been necessary. "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."⁴⁹ He begins his work with a cry, "Repent";⁵⁰ he ends his instructions with a message of remission of sins.⁵¹ Men are sinners, therefore in pity and love he came. Men are sinners, therefore they made him suffer so. His knowledge, and now his experience, combine to make Jesus believe that men are sinners.

⁴² Gen. iii. 15.⁴³ Mark viii. 31.⁴⁴ John xv. 13.⁴⁵ John x. 18.⁴⁶ Luke xix. 41.⁴⁷ John vii. 28.⁴⁸ Mark xiv. 62.⁴⁹ Mark ii. 17.⁵⁰ Matt. iv. 17.⁵¹ Luke xxiv. 47.

V.

PUNISHMENT FOR SIN.

"And these shall go away into eternal punishment."

MATTHEW xxv. 46.

SCHILLER speaks of a curtain let down at the extremities of human life, before which the whole race stands guessing what lies beyond. I take it to be a prudent thing to listen to the voice of the only one who has come from the other side to tell us what lies over there.¹ Our guess, influenced by selfishness, or even by charity, may be very wrong.

All situations where love for men and loyalty to righteousness seem to be in conflict are very trying to a conscientious man. He wishes to think and to do what is right, but he shrinks from doing what is unkind; and sometimes, when a man has, through a tender kindness, sacrificed the right, he even congratulates himself upon the breadth of his love. But men

¹ John viii. 42; xvi. 28.

despise as weak the character that is too kind to be just. Jesus was very loving and very tender, but he was very strong. While his heart was full of love, his view took in man's responsibility and God's righteousness. "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render to every man according to his deeds."² And nothing is clearer than that he believed a fearful doom to be hanging over men because of sin.³ The kind-hearted guesses of men have taken four forms; one holding that the sufferings of this life, with the added pains of death, suffice to turn the hearts of all men to God, so that the mercy of God opens heaven to all who thus suffer. We might inquire how it is known that these sufferings turn men to God, and we might inquire into the reasonableness of Christ's suffering so much, if any other suffering would accomplish for men the same object. This view denies any suffering after death.

Another view admits the justice of a suffering for sin, but denies that it is eternal. The reason for this denial is not that the Scriptures

² Matt. xvi. 27.

³ Matt. xviii. 6; xxi. 44.

do not teach eternal punishment, but that such a penalty seems too great, and that after enough has been endured, all will be restored to joy and to favor. Aside from the Saviour's clear teaching, to which we shall presently come, it may be worth while to remark that there is no evidence, by analogy or otherwise, to show that an evil and rebellious soul ceases to be evil and rebellious in the world to come. "An eternal sin" (Mark iii. 29) would imply an eternal sinner. And if only one day's suffering were needed to atone for one day's sin, then the sin of that suffering day would demand another day of suffering still, and thus, without a Saviour, the chain would never be broken.

Still another view, realizing that to treat the evil like the good would not be right, believes in the annihilation of the evil. This view can perhaps bring forward more plausible support from Scripture than the other two; but unless an adequate punishment preceded this strange issue, neither would this be right. Annihilation, if conceivable, must be conceived as a "sleep in which there is not even a dream." In one view, that of the miserable, this is rest,

not punishment. In another view, that of a heart with hope, this would be a terrible punishment, and it would be eternal.

Still a fourth scheme has been presented which seeks much support from Scripture, and whose purpose seems to be to represent God's dealings with men under the forms of love alone. This scheme is called the doctrine of Conditional Immortality, and teaches that all men are by nature mortal, both in body and in spirit, and that they only become immortal when touched by Jesus Christ. A little further reading among the words of Jesus will show that this view does not accord with the picture which he draws. In fact, for this view to prevail, some of his clearest words must be disregarded or counted untrue. Certainly he calls himself the Judge as well as the Saviour. When we stop to consider that justice also is a divine thing, is there really any call for us to attempt to make out Jesus better than he represents himself to be?

These four views we call guesses, because the source of the teaching is in the human heart

and mind. And now, without any theory to present, and with a desire to submit even the impulses of the heart to the teaching of Jesus Christ, we wish to show as accurately as possible what he believed on this awful subject.

I. He evidently believed that some bad result would follow a course of sin, and he describes this result as made up of three elements.

1. There would be *loss* — loss of God's gifts already bestowed,⁴ loss of all the gifts that he himself was bringing,⁵ loss of all the riches that are wrapped in the glorious promises. Here is a promise: "I go to prepare a place for you."⁶ But to some he says, "Whither I go ye cannot come."⁷ There is no word of blessing to men of a particular sort which does not mean that men of the opposite sort shall miss that blessing. "Blessed are the pure in heart."⁸ But suppose a man is not pure in heart? He does not promise life and hope and love to all, but to men of definite characteristics. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life."⁹ But suppose a man does not

⁴ Matt. xxv. 29. ⁵ Matt. v. 20; John vi. 53. ⁶ John xiv. 2.

⁷ John viii. 21.

⁸ Matt. v. 8.

⁹ John vi. 47.

believe? To miss these things is to suffer loss.
 "I pray not for the world." ¹⁰

2. The second element in this evil result may be described as the *natural consequences* of sin, only we must remember that God is the one who constitutes the connection between the sin and the consequence, and guarantees that the one shall follow the other. Men are already in a condition from which they need to be rescued, and failing a change in their prospects, certain physical and moral ills will follow, and should be expected to follow.¹¹ After the light has shined, darkness is deeper than it was before.¹² The blind will fall, ¹³ pollution will defile.¹⁴ "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins;" ¹⁵ "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." ¹⁶

3. One would think that to have no blessing from God was bad;¹⁷ that to be subject to the bondage of sin,¹⁸ and simply left to eat its fruit, was bad; but Jesus believed in a third element of evil in the form of a *judicial sentence* at the

¹⁰ John xvii. 9.

¹¹ Matt. vi. 23.

¹² John xv. 22.

¹³ Matt. xv. 14.

¹⁴ Matt. xv. 19, 20.

¹⁵ John viii. 24.

¹⁶ John v. 14.

¹⁷ John xiii. 8.

¹⁸ John viii. 34.

bar of a supreme personal Judge.¹⁹ If loss and natural consequence were all, what power would there be in repentance to change the result?²⁰ If God were not displeased, why should he speak at all of forgiveness and mercy?²¹ God measures with an even,²² yet retributive, hand.²³ There is a day of solemn judgment,²⁴ and God has power to inflict the sentence.²⁵ The messengers of God, with unerring discrimination, shall gather out all that offend and do evil.²⁶ Men of a certain sort, Jesus will himself deny;²⁷ and in the end having by a review of their life separated the world into two parts,²⁸ shall, under the rule of rendering to every man according to his deeds,²⁹ banish the one part from his presence forever.³⁰ And thus in places too numerous to quote, did Jesus hold up the belief that the infinitely righteous God would in a definite time³¹ meet the world, and that in that day the wicked and rebellious would go down in shame to a sentence divinely pronounced and divinely inflicted. "Be not

¹⁹ Matt. xxv. 31.²⁰ Luke xiii. 3.²¹ Matt. vi. 14, 15.²² Matt. vii. 2.²³ Matt. xviii. 35.²⁴ Matt. xii. 36.²⁵ Matt. x. 28.²⁶ Matt. xiii. 41.²⁷ Matt. x. 33.²⁸ Matt. xxv. 33.²⁹ Matt. xvi. 27.³⁰ Matt. xxv. 41.³¹ Matt. x. 15.

afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you; Fear him.”³²

This third element in the result of sin is really the important one, for herein are embraced the responsibility of men and the authority of God.³³ If there were no God at all, the first result would follow. If nature were our only God, and nature's laws the whole of his will, the second result would follow. It is Christian Theism — The God who is the Father of Jesus Christ, the God whom he loved, in whom he believed, and whose character he revealed — that tells us of a judicial sentence pronouncing adequate penalty upon the evil-doer.

II. Of this result of sin as *penalty*, Jesus believed —

I. That when the judgment was once rendered the doom was fixed. No cry from without would open the door that had been shut;³⁴ no intercession of friends would save the man

³² Luke xii. 4, 5. ³³ Matt. xii. 36, 37. ³⁴ Matt. xxv. 11, 12.

from loss;³⁵ no answering back would shake the judgment given.³⁶ The separation would be made,³⁷ and made even forcibly,³⁸ and the gulf that marks the separation is impassable. "And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us."³⁹

2. Jesus believed the penalty which God would count the just due of sin a very terrible thing. Here we must understand that such a man as Jesus would not suffer his most figurative words to be other than true figures. Not even the rhetoric of Jesus is false. So terrible is this penalty, that God sent him, and he willingly came that men might escape it. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish."⁴⁰ So great is it, that men might endure anything, loss of property,⁴¹ of bodily members,⁴² of life,⁴³ of existence,⁴⁴ rather than endure this. It is "outer darkness,"⁴⁵ a "parch-

³⁵ Luke xix. 25.

³ Matt. xxv. 44, 45.

³⁷ Matt. xiii. 41; xxv. 32.

³⁸ Matt. xiii. 42; xxv. 30.

³⁹ Luke xvi. 26.

⁴⁰ John iii. 16.

⁴¹ Mark viii. 36.

⁴² Matt. v. 29, 30.

⁴³ Matt. x. 39.

⁴⁴ Matt. xxvi. 24.

⁴⁵ Matt. viii. 12.

ing thirst,"⁴⁶ a "gnawing worm,"⁴⁷ a "burning fire." It is death;⁴⁸ it is hell.⁴⁹

3. He also believed that this awful condition lasts. The unforgiving man shall not be forgiven;⁵⁰ the "fire is not quenched";⁵¹ "their worm dieth not";⁵² the "fire is eternal."⁵³ The doom lasts just as long as the bliss of the righteous lasts, and the word that he uses for both is the word "eternal." "And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life."⁵⁴

III. The grounds of all punishment are the same. The judicial punishment of a day would rest upon the same justification as the punishment of a thousand years. Jesus mentions two reasons why sin will be visited with evil.

1. The first is the law of retribution. If one makes a debt, he ought to pay it.⁵⁵ The unforgiving man ought not to be forgiven,⁵⁶ and will not be.⁵⁰ He who trips up a weak and unoffending child ought to suffer for it.⁵⁷ The wicked man who swallows down the sub-

⁴⁶ Luke xvi. 24.

⁴⁷ Mark ix. 48.

⁴⁸ John viii. 51.

⁴⁹ Matt. xxiii. 33.

⁵⁰ Matt. vi. 15.

⁵¹ Mark ix. 43.

⁵² Mark ix. 48.

⁵³ Matt. xviii. 8.

⁵⁴ Matt. xxv. 46.

⁵⁵ Luke xii. 58.

⁵⁶ Matt. xviii. 35.

⁵⁷ Matt. xviii. 6.

stance of an unprotected widow must receive greater condemnation.⁵⁸ The betrayer of Jesus deserves bitterness and woe.⁵⁹ It is right, and only right, that a man should receive according to his deeds.⁶⁰ Woe, seven times repeated,⁶¹ has been pronounced against the Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, by the lips of a righteous man. We think that God has made men so that the judgment of the average man will coincide with the judgment of Jesus when he denies the man that denies him, and banishes those who are evil from his presence. "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven."⁶² Depart from me, ye cursed."⁶³ We cannot conceive that it would be right for John and Judas to be treated just alike.

2. The other fact out of which grows the inevitable punishment of the wicked is, that God will some day cause truth to be vindicated. It will be a bad day for darkness when everywhere the glorious light shall shine.⁶⁴ When

⁵⁸ Mark xii. 40.⁵⁹ Matt. xxvi. 24.⁶⁰ Matt. xvi. 27.⁶¹ Matt. xxiii. 13-29.⁶² Matt. x. 33.⁶³ Matt. xxv. 41.⁶⁴ John iii. 20.

God shall suddenly arise to avenge his own elect,⁶⁵ the oppressor and seducer shall be forced to loose their prey. However exalted Jesus is, whither he goes they cannot come.⁶⁶ When the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father and all the holy angels with him,⁶⁷ as come he will, and the persecutors and crucifiers shall see him,⁶⁸ as see him they will, surely shame like the shame of the defeated, and a pang like the pang of the dying, shall come to them.⁶⁹

The revelation of the Son of man in his true character will be like a raging flood ⁷⁰ or a consuming fire,⁷¹ and the tribes of men shall mourn.⁷² And when his reign is established, it will be with the breaking of all traitorous opposition.⁷³ Not all will be able to stand erect before him when he cometh.⁷⁴ How can the wicked escape punishment, if they simply get their dues,⁷⁵ and if some day the right shall be gloriously exalted? ⁷⁶ Certainly even the com-

⁶⁵Luke xviii. 7. ⁶⁶John viii. 2. ⁶⁷Matt. xvi. 27; xxv. 31.

⁶⁸Matt. xxvi. 64. ⁶⁹Rev. vi. 16. ⁷⁰Matt. xxiv. 37-39.

⁷¹Luke xviii. 28-30. ⁷²Matt. xxiv. 30.

⁷³Luke xix. 14-27; xxi. 25-28. ⁷⁴Luke xxi. 36.

⁷⁵Matt. xvi. 27. ⁷⁶John xvi. 33; xvii. 5.

ing of Jesus changed not the character of God. He is righteous still.⁷⁷

IV. Of this dread doctrine the speech of Jesus is full. In the sermon on the mount,⁷⁸ in parables or interpretation of parables,⁷⁹ in warning words,⁸⁰ in prophecy of the future,⁸¹ as often as he spoke of sin or of sinners, this thought came as substance or as shadow to his wonderful words, and how he felt is not hard to see.

He thought the rapacious Scribe ought to be condemned.⁸² He thanks his Father for his righteous sovereignty;⁸³ states how that Father will visit evil for sin,⁸⁴ and announces that when he comes to the station of Judge, his sentence will be like God's sentence in all respects.⁸⁵ His anger burned against those who in pretended zeal for the law violated the law,⁸⁶ and though his heart was full of a great love for men,⁸⁷ he yet longed for the setting up of a righteous kingdom,⁸⁸ and for the vindication

⁷⁷ John xvii. 25. ⁷⁸ Matt. v. 29. ⁷⁹ Matt. xiii. 39-42.

⁸⁰ Matt. xi. 22; Luke xii. 5.

⁸¹ Matt. xxv. 31-46.

⁸² Luke xx. 47.

⁸³ Matt. xi. 25-26.

⁸⁴ Matt. xviii. 35.

⁸⁵ John v. 27-30.

⁸⁶ Matt. xxiii. 33; Mark iii. 5.

⁸⁷ Matt. xxiii. 37.

⁸⁸ John xii. 31, 32.

of his true character before the world.⁸⁹ He, greater than Solomon or than Jonah, is despised.⁹⁰ He, a prisoner, stands before the bar of a wicked Judge, and his thoughts go out to the glorious day of manifestation.⁹¹ It will cost the cities that despised him much.⁹² It will overwhelm the wicked Judge. But he longs for the revelation of his glory, all the same.⁹³ This is not cruelty in God. Sin makes us to deserve the ill. This is not cruelty in Jesus. He in the very speaking, is filled with a deep love that will cause him to lay down his life for these doomed ones. Men choose the sin, and sin is their great enemy, not God and not Christ.

⁸⁹ John xvii. 4, 5, 23. ⁹⁰ Matt. xii. 41, 42. ⁹¹ Matt. xxvi. 64.

⁹² Matt. xi. 21.

⁹³ John xviii. 36, 37.

VI.

HIMSELF.

"I that speak unto thee am he."—JOHN iv. 26.

"Even if I bear witness of myself, yet my witness is true."—JOHN viii. 14.

A CONFESSIO:
"Gladly, thou divine Son of Mary, had I said something great of thee. At times I thought I saw in the flashing light of a blessed hour thy divine majesty adorned in spotless purity; but as I was about to fix the holy vision, the pencil trembled in my unskilled hand, and I could give only a pale outline. Who are we that attempt to describe thy holiness?"—*Pressensé*.

The undertaking of a great enterprise by a great man is always a profitable study. Several questions may be asked: What is the work that he undertakes to do? What moves him to undertake this work? What methods does he use? Why does he, rather than another of his time, undertake the work to which he devotes himself? To answer all these questions is to

answer this other question, What thinks this great man of himself? And if the work is very great, and the man is very courageous, so that we can trace through his whole career a sublime confidence in a self-wrought success, we say: This man believed in himself. It seems that in this respect the faith of Jesus never wavered. If there ever was a man upon earth that believed he saw a great work to be done, and that he was the man to do it, that man was Jesus Christ. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to accomplish his work."¹

We have seen that in his view men were sinners,² and that because of that sad fact, coupled with his knowledge of the moral government of God, he believed a great doom to be hanging over men.³ Here, then, is a right worthy enterprise, to deliver men from that awful doom,⁴ to cause them to cease forever being sinners in the sight of God,⁵ and to bring them so into life and favor that they shall be children of God in a new and gracious sense.⁶ In a word, to pierce that dark cloud of doom by a shining

¹ John iv. 34.

² See Chap. IV.

³ See Chap. V.

⁴ John iii. 16. ⁵ John viii. 34-36. ⁶ Matt. v. 9; Luke vi. 35.

pathway leading from each man's door straight up to the footstool of God's eternal throne. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."⁷ I know of no man who would for a moment suppose that it was in his power to do this great thing. How comes it that Jesus found it in his heart to think that this was his work? And that he would succeed?

It ought to be stated that there is with him no casting about for a business. The work he did is what he came to do.⁸ God loved men,⁴ and he loved them as God did,⁹ and God appointed him to this mission,¹⁰ and caused him to be born into the world that he might fulfil it.¹¹ We first find him a babe, a boy, a man, and he seems quite like other men; but soon there shines out a faith, a courage, a power that lifts him up, and he is no more like ourselves, but like God. He is God! Even the men who saw his human form and suffering, and had their difficulties increased thereby, could con-

⁷ John i. 51.⁸ Luke iv. 43.⁹ John xv. 9.¹⁰ John x. 36.¹¹ John xviii. 37.

fess him so to be.¹² Wondrous combination, true and preëminent manhood,¹³ coupled with real and conscious divinity!¹⁴ The Son of man, with affections, pains and members like other men, and yet with that admirable consciousness of power than enabled him to stand upon a tossing boat and to see without surprise the waves shrink, quivering, into peace before his mild rebuke.¹⁵ Had I thus spoken, and had the sea thus obeyed, astonishment would have overwhelmed me; but with Jesus such power seems no strange thing. He counts himself God's equal,¹⁶ and teaches men to honor him as they honor the ever-living God.¹⁷ A good man does not knowingly teach the ignorant an untrue thing.

I. Jesus, then, believed himself to be the Messiah. We have said that with him there was no appearance of looking for work, or of indecision as to whether he was the one to do the work when found. Long time before he had dwelt in glory with the Father.¹⁸ God had commissioned him to a great task,¹⁹ and had

¹² John xx. 28.¹³ Matt. viii. 20.¹⁴ John x. 30.¹⁵ Mark iv. 39.¹⁶ John v. 19.¹⁷ John v. 23.¹⁸ John xvii. 5.¹⁹ John x. 36.

sent others to tell the world of one anointed for the service.²⁰ Even the humblest of the people could say, "I know that Messiah cometh;"²¹ and when all is ready, Jesus stands forth and says, "I that speak unto thee am he."²² He was the Messiah when the plan was first conceived. He was the Messiah when the promise was made and repeated, and when, in after days, men were straining their eyes to discover him; and when he actually came into the world, he did not have to say, "I am going to take up this undone work and do it, and thus become the Messiah for men" — he said, "I am the Messiah"; "And because I am what I am, I am ordained of God and pressed in my own spirit to fulfil the task."

So, if any one ask, "How did Jesus come to think of himself as the Messiah?" the answer is that he was not formed upon the Messiah idea as revealed, but the reverse is true — the Messiah ideas and promises grew out of him and his undertaking. His task was not to assure his own heart, but to get others to believe as he did. His faith was so clear that

²⁰ Luke xxiv. 44.

²¹ John iv. 25

²² John iv. 26.

the doubts of others could not shake it. To the woman of Samaria he asserts the fact that he concerning whom the prophets had been talking was now come.²² To his friend, John the Baptist, who is in trouble and begins to doubt, he reveals his great power, in order to reassure the doubting heart.²³ On the confession of this faith he founds his church,²⁴ and, strange to say, God brought it about that he is finally condemned under this specific charge. They sought other faults, but found none,²⁵ and Jesus, the Messiah, dies because he makes this claim. "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God." And Jesus answered, "I am, and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven." ²⁶

II. Being the Messiah involved with him at least three duties or forms of activity. These duties are also of such a sort that only he can discharge them. He places himself as an absolutely essential quantity in human life. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and

²² John iv. 26. ²³ Matt. xi. 2-6. ²⁴ Matt. xvi. 16-18.

²⁵ Mark xiv. 55-59.

²⁶ Mark xiv. 62.

drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves.”²⁷ He stands between men and God. “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me.”²⁸ And their fate turns upon their relation to him. “Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.”²⁹

1. He brings a message and a revelation.

The message is of God’s great love, yearning over men, and calling them to a restless discontent with their estrangement from him; such a discontent as will lead them to turn from all evil, to come into the light, and to walk in it. “God so loved the world.”³⁰ “Repent ye.”³¹ “He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.”³²

The revelation is of the great God himself. He alone of men knows God, and only he can teach this knowledge to others.³³ He shows

²⁷ John vi. 53.

²⁸ John xiv. 6.

²⁹ Matt. x. 32, 33.

³⁰ John iii. 16.

³¹ Matt. iv. 17.

³² John iii. 21.

³³ Matt. xi. 27.

men plainly of the Father,³⁴ and so competent is he for this, and so divine, that when a man knows him, he has already known God.³⁵ So confident is he of his place as the world's great teacher, that he presumes to speak with absolute authority. "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life."³⁶ The earnestness and sincerity of his speech thrilled the hearts even of his enemies.³⁷ No such teaching as his had ever been heard before.³⁸ His "I say unto you" was supreme.³⁹ He also deemed his message to be urgent, for he tarries not for men to come to him, but going from city to city, he teaches and preaches with the same commanding spirit.

2. There is not only a Messiah message, but a Messiah life.⁴⁰ The form that that life would take had long been a matter of debate. How is the life of a Messiah to differ from the lives of other men? Is he king, with kingly retinue, or is he a suffering servant of the world? In his day, all the readers of all the prophecies had failed to find the answer.⁴¹ Prominent he puts

³⁴ John xvi. 25.³⁵ John xiv. 9.³⁶ John vi. 63.³⁷ Matt. vii. 28, 29; xiii. 54.³⁸ John vii. 46.³⁹ Matt. v. 22 ("I" emphatic).⁴⁰ Matt. ix. 35.⁴¹ John vii. 25-44.

the delivery of a gracious message to needy ones. "I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for therefore was I sent."⁴² But it is more; he is to heal the broken-hearted by getting close to the burdened ones — lifting up their loads of ill, and making their sorrows his own. "Jesus wept."⁴³ And it is not sympathy alone that he brings, but sight,⁴⁴ and health,⁴⁵ and life and forgiveness of sin.⁴⁷

The Messiah's life belongs to the world. "I am the light of the world."⁴⁸ We read not of anything done for his own comfort and ease. His was a kingly heart, oftentimes doing things with spirit high enough⁴⁹—but chiefly did he count the world's Messiah to be the world's servant.⁵⁰ He touched the sores and filth of men as humbly as a servant;⁵¹ he healed and cleansed them as royally as God.⁵² A kingly heart, doing humble things for a high purpose⁵³—this was the manner of Jesus' life, and he lived as a Messiah ought to live.

⁴² Luke iv. 43.⁴³ John xi. 35.⁴⁴ Luke iv. 18.⁴⁵ Matt. ix. 35.⁴⁶ John x. 10.⁴⁷ Matt. ix. 6.⁴⁸ John viii. 12.⁴⁹ John ii. 15.⁵⁰ Matt. xx. 28.⁵¹ Matt. viii. 3; John xiii. 5.⁵² Matt. viii. 3.⁵³ John xiii. 15.

These two features of the Messiah's work touch ignorance and sorrow and sickness; but these things, while bad enough, are themselves indications of a worse disease, and that disease is sin. The teachings of Jesus, and the unselfish life of Jesus, would have alleviated in many ways the condition of men, but even his teachings and example would have been insufficient for this greater task of bringing in salvation from sin. Had he done ten times the amount of that sort of work, the grain of wheat would have still abided alone.⁵⁴ So, to his mind, neither his teaching nor his life were the essential things, but —

3. His death. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."⁵⁵ In the death lies the power. The message and the life all tend to the supreme sacrifice. They explain the death, and the death gives color to them. By the first he seeks; by the last he saves. Early he showed his knowledge of the fact that he must be lifted up,⁵⁶ but it is only after he had wrought into the hearts of his followers the sublime faith that he was the

⁵⁴ John xii. 24.

⁵⁵ John xii. 32.

⁵⁶ John iii. 14.

Christ ⁵⁷ that immediately he begins to open his heart still further and to show that there was a necessity upon him to die.⁵⁸ He must go to Jerusalem, not to teach and probably to die, but he must go there purposely to die; and when his friend would dissuade him from his purpose, he rebukes Peter most harshly for ignorance and Satan-likeness.⁵⁹

The great fact stands out as pressing upon his mind, and casting its shadow forward to darken the way as he went on to meet it. He tells his disciples as they journey toward the city,⁶⁰ at the anointing,⁶¹ at the last supper — the Shepherd about to be smitten tells them, out of his store of Bible knowledge, that God had caused it so to be written.⁶² The fact he foreknew,⁶³ and the manner of death's coming,⁶⁴ and the reason;⁶⁵ and death came upon him in a way fully to justify his forebodings. The increasing dread with which he advanced into the increasing darkness shows that either his death meant more, or that his courage was less

⁵⁷ Matt. xvi. 16, 20.⁵⁸ Matt. xvi. 21.⁵⁹ Matt. xvi. 23.⁶⁰ Matt. xx. 17, 18.⁶¹ Matt. xxvi. 12.⁶² Matt. xxvi. 31.⁶³ Matt. xvi. 21.⁶⁴ John xii. 33.⁶⁵ Matt. xx. 28.

than that of some other men who have passed that way.⁶⁶ Still, he dies like no other man. No one could take away his life, he being unwilling. "I lay it down of myself."⁶⁷ He was bound, not by fetters, but by a sanctified purpose, dedicating him to loyalty and to love. "The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"⁶⁸ "The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep."⁶⁹

It has been seen that his whole life of service was a message and an example, and a burden-bearing; but it is equally clear that in his view, if he had failed to die, his whole mission would have been a failure. "Therefore doth the Father love me because I lay down my life that I may take it again."⁷⁰ "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations."⁷¹ The giving of his life had a definite meaning to him. Led by the purpose to weaken the doctrine of his sacrificial death, some think that they are

⁶⁶ Luke xxii. 44.⁶⁷ John x. 18.⁶⁸ John xviii. 15.⁶⁶ Luke xxii. 44.⁶⁷ John x. 18.⁶⁸ John xviii. 11.

teaching truth when they assert that the "giving of his life" meant what those words might mean in the indefinite English, if one should say a man gave his life to a cause; that is, gave the whole course of his life. Let it be noted that in Greek there are three words which mean life: *βίος*,⁷² meaning the course of life, or one's active existence; *ζωή*,⁷³ meaning the life principle, or life in the abstract; and *ψυχή*,⁷⁴ meaning the life that is lost with the pouring out of the blood. It is life in this last sense that one may stake in battle, or give for his country. It is this idea of life, the word *ψυχή*, which in the Gospels is used with the possessive pronouns; and this is the life which Jesus speaks of when he says, "I lay down my life."⁷⁵ No man ever gave himself in service with more untiring devotion than he. But this is not what was in his mind when he spoke of being "lifted up from the earth,"⁷⁶ and giving "his life a ransom for many."⁷⁷ Teaching and living might cure the ignorance of men, and lead them to miss some of the natural conse-

⁷² Luke viii. 14.⁷³ John i. 4.⁷⁴ Matt. ii. 20.⁷⁵ John x. 17, comp. Matt. xx. 28. ⁷⁶ John iii. 14; xii. 34.⁷⁷ Matt. xx. 28.

quences of sin. The hard problem was to liberate them from the obligation to punishment.⁷⁸ His people shall not perish.⁷⁹ If he is lifted up, they shall have eternal life.⁸⁰

He is no more ignorant of the reason for his death than he is of the fact. He studies the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and finds it describing what he came to do.⁸¹ He talks of his death with Moses and Elijah on the mount,⁸² perhaps instructing them, or else assuring his own human heart by converse with men who knew his glory; and then, in plain speech, tells his disciples that the "Good Shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep."⁸³ "The Son of man gives his life a ransom for many."⁸⁴ Of himself he lays down his life, and the Father loves him for so doing.⁸⁵ There is no doubt, then about his understanding the reason of what he does. The labor was to make them understand, for they were "foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets had spoken."⁸⁶ Again and again he returns to the subject.⁸⁷ His disciples, knowing not

⁷⁸ Luke xxiv. 46, 47. ⁷⁹ John x. 28. ⁸⁰ John iii. 14, 15.

⁸¹ Luke xviii. 32; xxiv. 46. ⁸² Luke ix. 31. ⁸³ John x. 11.

⁸⁴ Matt. xx. 28. ⁸⁵ John x. 17. ⁸⁶ Luke xxiv. 25.

⁸⁷ Matt. xvi. 21; xx. 17, 18; xxvi. 12, 31.

the reason, cannot believe the fact.⁸⁸ Perhaps to their minds the clearest statement comes near the close of the conflict.⁸⁹ With the sacrifice of the paschal lamb immediately before him, the body of the lamb and the blood of the lamb vividly present to the minds of the devout men who followed him, he takes a loaf of bread and says, "This is my body" (not the lamb's). And the cup he takes and says, "This is my blood (not the lamb's) which is poured out for you." At the paschal supper, to speak words like these could mean only one thing. Jesus believed he was about to die for men in a sense similar to that in which the Passover lamb was slain for them. As the paschal lamb was given to redeem the first-born of Israel, so the Son of man came "to give his life a ransom for many."⁸⁴

And when the suffering was all over, before ascending into the ineffable glory, he tarries with them for a little while, tenderly urging upon them the thought that it was right for him so to die.⁹⁰ After passing through the darkness, because he knew the necessity and the glory to come, he approves the way and the

⁸⁸ Matt. xvi. 22.

⁸⁹ Luke xx. 14-20.

⁹⁰ Luke xxiv. 44.

result. "Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?"⁹¹ The final gospel is that sins are remitted through a ransom, and that Jesus Christ is that ransom.⁹²

To undertake such a work, even on a small scale, would mark a man either great or insane; but how sublime is Jesus! He does this for the world.⁹³ He stands, in his view, a man and God,⁹⁴ between men and God.⁹⁵ He is absolutely essential to every human soul.⁹⁶ For knowledge, guidance, life — for all spiritual good, men need him,⁹⁵ and failing to find him are lost.⁹⁷ His power is unlimited,⁹⁸ and his station is the station of God.⁹⁹ "Me, men must honor and serve, and trust as they do the eternal God."¹⁰⁰ "Me, men may worship,¹⁰¹ and call by the names that belong to God alone.¹⁰²

So loving and so high is he, that my soul may fly toward him through all the ages that my soul shall live; and if my soul, or any other

⁹¹ Luke xxiv. 26.

⁹² Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

⁹³ John iiii. 16; compare 1 John ii. 2.

⁹⁴ John x. 33-36.

⁹⁵ John xiv. 6.

⁹⁶ John vi. 53.

⁹⁷ John iii. 18.

⁹⁸ Matt. ix. 27.

⁹⁹ John xvii. 5.

¹⁰⁰ John v. 23.

¹⁰¹ John ix. 38.

¹⁰² John xx. 28.

human soul, is thirsty, or hungry, or weary, Jesus taught and Jesus believed that in himself alone were drink and food and rest to be found. "The bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world." ¹⁰³ "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." ¹⁰⁴ "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." ¹⁰⁵ May I think the thoughts of Jesus after him, and his creed become my creed, so that he may be to me all that he is, all that he believed himself to be.

¹⁰³ John vi. 33.¹⁰⁴ John vi. 35.¹⁰⁵ Matt. xi. 28.

VII.

REDEEMED MEN.

“He himself knew what was in man.”—JOHN ii. 25.

THE boundary line between knowledge and faith is sometimes hard to fix. What a man knows makes up a part of his system of belief, and what he believes slowly grows into a form of knowledge for him. We are clearly told that Jesus, in his far-reaching view, knew what was in man; knows even the false and the openly opposed;¹ doubly then does he know the man that is his own, for the new and great things in this man are the work of his own hands in a peculiar sense.² Like a skillful workman, he has passed through the tangled wood of this world, and, with a keen eye, has selected here and there a tree out of which he will form the beams and pillars for the temple he is building.³

¹ John ii. 24.

² John x. 28; xvii. 6-8.

³ John xv. 16.

He makes no mistakes.⁴ He is setting up a kingdom,⁵ and that kingdom is not a place with geographical boundaries, but simply a kingdom of men — men who erstwhile were subjects of an alien power,⁶ but now, by a divine process of naturalization, have been transferred into a new kingdom, and fitted, by throwing off their old allegiance and by renewal of their very nature, to take upon them the obligations of this new King. "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."⁷ "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven."⁸ "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."⁹

We wish to get his view of these redeemed ones. He has made them to differ from common men,¹⁰ and loves them in a peculiar way,¹¹ for, divide the world as you please, his portion is his people. This may have no value in the eyes of the world, which thinks that the be-

⁴ John vi. 64.

⁵ Matt. iv. 17.

⁶ John xv. 19.

⁷ Luke xiv. 33.

⁸ Matt. xviii. 3.

⁹ John iii. 3.

¹⁰ John xv. 14-16.

¹¹ John xiv. 21-23.

liever only pretends to a life in any way different from the life of other men, and the redeemed man himself may sometimes lightly esteem the work that has been done for him, and be ignorant of its value, like a man who, for a life-time, labors to secure a scant living from a stingy soil, while ignorant that every day he walks above a mine of exhaustless riches. But what says Jesus? He knows men — knows what they have been and are — knows, too, the grand conception that fills his mind,¹² and after which he is forming every child of God; knows how weak the new life is,¹³ and knows, too, how hard the old life dies,¹⁴ and yet believes in man — sees more in him than has been seen before — and because he knows, or in spite of knowing, believes in him — believes in his future and trusts him. “They shall never perish.”¹⁵ “I have called you friends.”¹⁶

I. These men have experienced a great change. Jesus tells us what this change is, and who brings it about, but just how the change

¹² Luke xx. 29, 30.

¹³ Matt. xii. 20; Mark ix. 42.

¹⁴ Luke ix. 49, 54.

¹⁵ John x. 28.

¹⁶ John xv. 15.

is produced he does not explain. He does insist,¹⁷ however, that it is not merely intellectual enlightenment. No teacher, though he be come from God, can by simple teaching produce this great result. Nor is it a mere going back to the comparative innocence of childhood, however great a miracle that would be. A man might literally be born again, and yet not know what this great thing is of which he speaks; still, it is a new birth, for he must use a figure of speech from common life in order to bring down the new thought to minds that have never risen so high as this. A new birth, and, stranger still, a "passing out of death into life,"¹⁸ he calls it. What can this possibly mean concerning the living spirits of men? "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves."¹⁹ "The Son also giveth life to whom he will."²⁰

To each person of the trinity he ascribes the power to work this marvel in the life of men.²¹

¹⁷ For following, examine John iii. 1-15. ¹⁸ John v. 24.

¹⁹ John vi. 53.

²⁰ John v. 21.

²¹ To the Father, John vi. 44; to the Son, John v. 21; x. 28; to the Spirit, John iii. 5.

Men must believe²² and come,²³ but God gives eternal life or quickens the dead, or is author of the new birth;²¹ still he tells us not how, nor does he tell us this unless it be under the likeness of another wonderful thing.²⁴ A stricken Israelite, in obedience to God's command, looked upon a brazen serpent, and lo! the doomed and dying man went free and well. What cured him? Unless we say God, we know not what to say. But how? Ah! there the Saviour speaks to our pride and says: "I am talking about things that I know, and of which other teachers in Israel are ignorant. You will understand when your faith has grown a little stronger."²⁵

It is easier for us to know the greatness of the work than it is to know its nature. Results are clearer than causes. There is a point at which life and death may stand so close that we can scarcely distinguish a dividing line; still, they are separated by the boundless gulf that divides the living from the dead. So these new-born people may stand so close to the bor-

²² John iii. 18. ²³ John v. 40. ²⁴ John iii. 14. ²⁵ John iii. 9-12.

der-line that to human eyes they appear very like the men on the other side; yet to the eyes of Jesus there is a gulf so wide that no man can cross it, save by divine power.²⁶ His view will become our view when we consider his teaching as to the old status of these men, and as to the new status of these men.

I. The old status. This was made up of a relation and a condition. A man, before Jesus finds him and begins his wondrous work, is a child of the devil, with a strong family likeness to the father,²⁷ and he is so opposed to the wooings of the Saviour's love, so far away and dead, that he cannot come to the light unless the Father draw him.²⁶ His face to the devil, his back to God. In love with sin, hating the good.²⁸ His condition may be truly described as blind,²⁹ unable even to see the grace and love of God; as bound, drawn away and held by ties which it is impossible for him to break; as bruised, beaten by God's judgments and his own conscience, as well as by the hard service of the devil; as broken-hearted, forlorn and

²⁶ John vi. 44.

²⁷ Matt. xlii. 38; John viii. 44.

²⁸ John iii. 20; xv. 18. ²⁹ See Luke iv. 18.

hopeless, with noble aspirations gone, and despair hastening on — altogether in a condition of absolute poverty, like the poverty of the prodigal who has spent all, and who in the time of stress has no friends.³⁰

2. The new status. Jesus comes to a man, lean and miserable and estranged from God, and by this mighty work of which I am speaking, graciously gives life where death reigned,³¹ sight and light, instead of blindness and darkness;³² liberates the captive, heals the broken-hearted, nor stops until he has taken these children of the devil, and made them sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.³³ This does not mean such a sonship only as may be claimed by all men, by reason of creation and the general love of God for men³⁴ — it makes a man a brother of Jesus Christ and a child of his Father. Who are my brethren? “Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, he is my brother.”³⁵ And mark how, after the resurrection, he sends a message to his *brethren*, not to the world. “Go unto my brethren, and say

³⁰ Luke xv. 14–16.

³¹ John xvii. 2.

³² John viii. 12.

³³ Luke vi. 35; compare 2 Cor. vi. 18.

³⁴ John viii. 41.

³⁵ Matt. xii. 48–50.

to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and unto my God and your God.”³⁶ *That loving message went out to a chosen few,* nor could it with reason or truth have gone to men at large who despised and hated him. “If God were your Father, ye would love me”³⁷—and no man who is indifferent to Christ or inimical to Christ has a right to say “My Father” in this high sense. Where the filial spirit is not found, that form of words would be a mockery. This transformation of a doomed enemy into a son who is heir to all the promises was in the mind of Jesus, a real and a mighty change.

II. But not only was this change great. He believed the gift of God, man’s new possession, to be of priceless value. There is in it something not desirable only, but essential to man—so essential that though he gain the whole world, if he miss this he is a bankrupt still.³⁸ Put the world on one side, and this simple gift on the other, and the wise trader will take this.³⁹ Worldly possessions are bought too

³⁶ John xx. 17.

³⁷ John viii. 42.

³⁸ Mark viii. 36.

³⁹ Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

dear, if the price be the man who seeks them, or even if they cost his life, but here is a treasure for which one may well lay down this present life, for in so doing he gains himself, and for himself a more enduring life.⁴⁰ But the gift is not simply of great intrinsic value. It must also be estimated by its guarantees. He gives two:

1. The redeemed man is insured against loss. No man shall die with Jesus in his debt. Turn away, give up, surrender worldly good, and you will receive more.⁴¹ Go forth and serve by following and by doing, and not even a cup of cold water will I forget.⁴² I will not suffer any man to lose by me.

2. He also gives a guarantee for the future. Trust on, and labor on, and your work will stand; and better still, ye too shall stand. Against my building, my body, the gates of hell shall not prevail,⁴³ and my men shall stand up against wind and flood, like houses built on rocks, as solid as the rocks themselves.⁴⁴

III. Though this possession was of price-

⁴⁰ Mark viii. 35.

⁴¹ Mark x. 28-30.

⁴² Matt. x. 42.

⁴³ Matt. xvi. 18.

⁴⁴ Matt. vii. 24, 25.

less value, Jesus believed that it was of increasing richness. The new-born, the redeemed man, is at the worst richer than any natural man can ever be, but is by no means so rich as he may, nay, as he will be. Only place these two principles together, and see if there is any process known to us by which this man's wealth may be estimated. (*a*) The good seed in good ground brings forth an hundredfold,⁴⁵ and (*b*) "Unto every one that hath shall be given."⁴⁶ The soil, richer each day by divine grace, receiving new increments of seed at the hand of the divine Husbandman, then receiving more and more according as more and more is possessed!

The prayer of Jesus for his people holds in its lap the same blessed principle: "Sanctify them in the truth;"⁴⁷ set them apart and make them holy by means of thy divine truth; and the truth comes as the light breaks, gradually. Thus we can bear it.⁴⁸ The more of truth is brought to bear, and the more what is brought to bear produces its desired results,⁴⁹ the larger

⁴⁵ Matt. xiii. 33.⁴⁶ Matt. xxv. 29.⁴⁷ John xvii. 17.⁴⁸ John xvi. 12, 13.⁴⁹ John xv. 3.

our minds and hearts become, and the holier we grow. To know God is for the regenerate heart to love him. To know him more is to love him more; and love will grow for me as long as new views of him shall break upon my soul. It is idle to talk of Sinless Perfection, the result, being complete before truth, the means, has been exhausted. To say that we are intrinsically and perfectly holy is to say that we know all of God's truth, and that that truth has finished its beneficent workings in us. Our Saviour's view was that his people were moved upon by an inexhaustible power,⁵⁰ and were receivers of boundless gifts,⁵¹ which grew richer and larger as men were able to receive them.⁵²

IV. These things the Saviour held, and one other besides them. He believed that these men became objects of personal concern and regard on the part of God himself. "If any man serve me, him will my Father honor,"⁵³ and "my Father will love him."⁵⁴ He will keep them so safe that no one shall be able to

⁵⁰ John xvii. 2.

⁵¹ John iv. 10; Luke xxii. 29, 30.

⁵² John xvi. 12.

⁵³ John xii. 26.

⁵⁴ John xiv. 23.

pluck them out of his hand.⁵⁵ When they cry, he will rise to avenge their wrongs;⁵⁶ and woe betide the man that meets God angry because one of his little ones has been ensnared.⁵⁷ He considers their needs in his providential control⁵⁸ and in his judgments on the world, and for their sakes he shortens the awful days of the final misery. "And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." ⁵⁹

We are not much in the eyes of the world, and in our own eyes we are weak and helpless men; but it is grand to have God bestowing rich gifts upon us, and fashioning these lives until we become something to him⁶⁰ — men for whom he has spent more than for all the world besides,⁶¹ to whom he has given more than to the angels in heaven,⁶² and for whom the future holds richer gifts than it is possible to conceive⁶³ — these men he loves.

Jesus knew all this; Jesus believed all this; Jesus believed in these men, their present worth

⁵⁵ John x. 29.⁵⁶ Luke xviii. 7.⁵⁷ Matt. xviii. 6.⁵⁸ Matt. vi. 30-32.⁵⁹ Matt. xxiv. 22.⁶⁰ Matt. xviii. 12-14.⁶¹ Mark xii. 1.⁶² John fii. 16.⁶³ John xvii. 24.

and their future wealth; he believed that when his work for them was done, they would be worthy and capable of bearing these great honors — the men would meet the event;⁶⁴ and he sets them in the world as the stars of heaven are set — some for beauty, to gladden the hearts of all with eyes to see; some as stars of hope, telling of a coming day, and by their brightness turning men to think of what a man will be when the full day comes in all its splendor; and some as guides, steady as the very pole star is steady, to call men back that are lost, and leading, with God's own light, the wanderers through the wilderness of this world. "Ye are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."⁶⁵ It is desirable that this faith of Jesus should become our faith. God's child should believe in and love God's children.⁶⁶ To step from death to life is a mighty stride;⁶⁷ to have Christ is to be rich;⁶⁸ to be heir of God is ineffable glory;⁶⁹ these men are the world's nobility.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Matt. x. 23; compare Rev. iii. 4.⁶⁵ Matt. v. 14, 16.⁶⁶ John xv. 12.⁶⁷ John v. 24.⁶⁸ Matt. xiii. 14.⁶⁹ Matt. xxv. 34.⁷⁰ Matt. xi. 11.

VIII.

THE KINGDOM.

“Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God and saying: The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe in the gospel.”—MARK i. 14, 15.

GOD reigns. But there is a narrow and a broad scope to this idea. Just as he is the Father of all men, but in a special sense the Father of those that believe, so he is King over an essential and universal kingdom; but is also King in a new and revealed sense of a certain restricted kingdom, which in the word of Jesus is variously described as the “kingdom of heaven”¹ and the “kingdom of God.”² This name, in one point of view, contains Christ’s ideal for his people; but when we have purpose and power to accomplish them, ideals constitute also a part of our creed.

This special reign of God in the Messiah had

¹ Matt. v. 3.

Matt. xii. 28.

been spoken of by the prophets.³ And in the time of Christ not a few of the people, with a real heart-sickness at the stress of the times, and the deferred hope, were waiting for it.⁴ Only Jesus fully understood the sort that this kingdom was to be. The King makes the kingdom, and the unearthly King brings in a kingdom, not of this world, but spiritual.⁵ A kingdom that may be in a single heart,⁶ and yet which contains all the hearts of all the lovers of God.⁷

Not Moses himself, bearing a message of deliverance to oppressed Israel, could have rejoiced more than did Jesus when, to his own benighted generation, he lifted up his voice and preached the blessed gospel of the glorious kingdom.⁸ The King himself preaches the gospel of the kingdom; and in this term he also comprehends the sum of all the preaching of all the preachers sent by him to the end of time. "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."⁹ Some mis-

³ Isa. ix. 6, 7; Dan. ii. 44.

⁴ Luke ii. 25, 38.

⁵ John xviii. 36.

⁶ Mark x. 15.

⁷ Matt. xlii. 38.

⁸ Matt. iv. 23.

⁹ Comp. Matt. x. 7; Luke x. 9; Matt. xxiv. 14; Acts i. 3; viii. 12.

understood his meaning;¹⁰ some wrested his meaning, in order to destroy him;¹¹ but he is not shaken. His first proclamation is this,¹² and his last confession is this:¹³ "I am a King, and I have a kingdom." In his preaching, he declares the kingdom to be near — so near that it furnishes a reason for immediate action on the part of all who hear. Prepare; repent, for the kingdom comes.¹² It comes as does the gentle spring, without noise or observation.¹⁴ It is within you;¹⁵ it will come with manifest power in the lives of men now living;¹⁶ the signs of its power are the overthrow of evil, and the building up of good.¹⁷ It is this peculiar kingdom — not the essential sovereignty of God — for which his people are instructed to pray, when they say, "Thy kingdom come."¹⁸ We call that faith strong which enables one to give substance to things unseen. To the heart of Jesus other kingdoms seemed unsubstantial, while this unseen kingdom was real and eternal.¹⁹ From his various proclama-

¹⁰ Luke xiv. 15.¹¹ Luke xxiii. 12.¹² Matt. iv. 17.¹³ John xviii. 37.¹⁴ Luke xvii. 20.¹⁵ Luke xvii. 21.¹⁶ Mark ix. 11.¹⁷ Matt. xii. 25-30.¹⁸ Matt. vi. 10.¹⁹ Matt. xxiv. 1-31.

tions there comes to us of the cruder sight a revelation of the things which his heart saw, and we can learn out of his lips the following points concerning that kingdom of which he is King, and of which redeemed men are the subjects.

I. The gate of entrance into the kingdom of God coincides with the new birth. "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."²⁰ We have seen how Jesus believed that men untouched by him belong to a hostile kingdom.²¹ The accretions to his kingdom come from the spoils of that;²² still are they unfit for him until his great power not only transfers them, but transforms them, as by a new creation.²³ They, on their part, by repentance throw off the old allegiance,²⁴ and by faith take on the new. Men are not to rest like stones, to be bodily lifted. Their duty is to strive to enter into the kingdom of Christ.²⁵ And though they have great obstacles like the love of riches,²⁶ and though they be dead

²⁰ John iii. 3.

²³ John v. 21.

²¹ See Chap. IV.

²⁴ Mark i. 15.

²⁶ Mark x. 24.

²² Matt. xli. 29.

²⁵ Luke xlii. 24-28.

toward the claims of God, as the eyes of Bartimæus were dead to the light, yet are they bound like him to put forth every power of mind and of heart that is yet alive — reason, memory, imagination, conscience — to bring the dead part of themselves to Jesus.²⁷ The amiable, honest, ingenuous man may be near the kingdom, while still without its bounds.²⁸ To make the transfer, actually to cross over the boundary line, means the cutting away of every tie which binds one to that other life. “Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”²⁹ Not only does he take the oath of allegiance to this, he forswears his allegiance to that kingdom.

II. The members of this kingdom, as it lay in the mind of Jesus, possess certain unusual characteristics, and in possessing them are genuine. They do not merely pretend to admire or to obey the commands. They are real men, who do what they say,³⁰ and when they build, build upon the eternal rock.³¹ They are

²⁷ Mark x. 46–52.

²⁸ Mark xlii. 34.

²⁹ Luke xiv. 33.

³⁰ Matt. vii. 21; xxiii. 3.

³¹ Matt. vii. 24.

kind to others' faults,³² severe upon their own.³³ They do not go about making a display of what they do or do not possess.³⁴ What is seen in them is the shining out of a real principle, which simply cannot be hid.³⁵ This genuineness is a pervasive quality that attaches to everything that this new man does. In every department of his being, in every mark that is mentioned below, this must be understood — he is not a hypocrite.³⁶

I. Unworldliness. In general terms, this would mean that his foreswearing of allegiance to the old kingdom was genuinely done. Jesus could see a man in which this had gone so far that he loves not and serves not the self to which that old world ministers³⁷ — a man to whom the new kingdom and the new King are first³⁸ — a man who does not even seek the temporal accessories that go with the well-being of the new service,³⁹ — in a word, a man who has made a complete transfer of his affections, and lives from a new set of motives. He now does not serve mammon.⁴⁰

³² Luke vi. 36, 37. ³³ Matt. v. 29, 30. ³⁴ Matt. vi. 1-18.

³⁵ Matt. v. 14. ³⁶ Matt. vi. 2; Luke xii. 1, 2.

³⁷ Luke xii. 21, 33. ³⁸ Matt. vi. 33. ³⁹ John vi. 26, 27.

⁴⁰ Matt. vi. 24.

2. Consecration. This means that though he be beyond the jurisdiction of the old kingdom,⁴¹ he is no expatriated wanderer.⁴² He has a new King, to whom all his love and all his life belong.⁴³ Though in this kingdom Jesus is King, he gave his all to it,⁴⁴ and he expects his subjects to do as much.⁴⁵ The spirit of the King permeates the spirit of the people.⁴⁶ Loyalty to Christ transcends all other passions. So devoted is this man, that for the love of his new Lord he can go forth bearing a cross ready at hand for his own crucifixion. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."⁴⁷

Because of this devotion, certain strange things come to pass. For inner joy he is not dependent upon the abundance of earthly things which he possesses.⁴⁸ His heart is ever bigger than his hoard. In conduct he ever gives an overplus. What he might be expected to do because he is a man, he does; but ever

⁴¹ John viii. 32. ⁴² John xii. 26. ⁴³ Matt. xvii. 37.

⁴⁴ John x. 17. ⁴⁵ John xv. 12, 13.

⁴⁶ Matt. xx. 26-28; xviii. 31. ⁴⁷ Matt. xvi. 24.

⁴⁸ Luke xii. 15; Matt. v. 11, 12.

does he add *the little more* which shows how love of Jesus has made him to differ from the world.⁴⁹ In most unlikely places he finds his blessings,⁵⁰ and seeks his honors where other men see only shame.⁵¹ When these two things, unworldliness and consecration, meet in the same man, you have a subject of Jesus' kingdom, a man who turns from worldly things without regret,⁵² and follows Christ without distraction. "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."⁵³ If this be the idea of Jesus, does he find faith on the earth?

III. The relation between the subject and the King.

It is difficult to grasp Christ's view of this relation. The king is absolute in power and authority, but at the same time he exhibits an amazingly democratic spirit. His people draw near to him, and he gives them added power to understand his will.⁵⁴ They can ask him anything they wish,⁵⁵ and he for love will hear them. The King is a Father⁵⁶ and a Shep-

⁴⁹ Luke vi. 29-36. ⁵⁰ Matt. v. 3-12. ⁵¹ Mark x. 42-44.

⁵² Luke xvii. 31, 32.

⁵³ Luke ix. 62.

⁵⁴ John vii. 17; xvi. 12, 13.

⁵⁵ John xv. 7, 16.

⁵⁶ Luke xii. 32.

herd,⁵⁷ and spares not himself to protect his people.⁵⁷ His laws are not to tax and to oppress them, but are devised for their advantage;⁵⁸ nor must they be so interpreted as to crush the people's life.⁵⁹ He governs them, not as a rebellious province would be governed, but with equal laws with those which prevail in the heavenly kingdom.⁶⁰ Those that keep these laws are close to the heart of the Sovereign, and he will not hold himself aloof, but will love them so much that he will come down into their homes and abide. The King comes down, the man is lifted up. Whence was there ever such a thought as this thought of Jesus — men entering into terms of mutual confidence with God. "If a man love me he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."⁶¹

IV. The relation of the members of this kingdom to each other. There being one supreme Sovereign,⁶² and every subject of the kingdom being equally exalted by equal rights

⁵⁷ John x. 11.⁵⁸ Mark ii. 27.⁵⁹ Matt. xxi. 7.⁶⁰ Matt. vi. 10.⁶¹ John xiv. 23.⁶² Matt. xxii. 10.

of approach to him, there is no such thing as one asserting preëminence above another.⁶² All are brethren.⁶² The right hand is usually thought most of, but this is simply because it has been used most, and so in this kingdom a man may come to the front by urgent, and oft-times bitter, service;⁶³ but this gives him no rights of lordship. It is honor freely given, not something that he may claim. Jesus expects his people to be great after the style that he was great,⁶⁴ and a bitter cup separates the ordinary human spirit from the highest place.⁶⁵ The true spirit is the child-spirit,⁶⁶ opposing none that honor the King,⁶⁷ and not being disturbed though others may think but little of you.⁶⁸ Jesus propounds a short, practical code, by which they may know what to do. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them."⁶⁹ This rule is intended for a measure, not for a motive of conduct. When it becomes a motive, all grace is lost. In Jesus' view, these men are all kings and all servants. His own example shows that

⁶² Matt. xxii. 10. ⁶³ Mark x. 42-45. ⁶⁴ Mark x. 45.

⁶⁵ Matt. xx. 22. ⁶⁶ Luke ix. 46-48. ⁶⁷ Mark ix. 38, 39.

⁶⁸ Luke ix. 53-55.

⁶⁹ Matt. vii. 12.

there was in his mind a state in which every servant is brother to his lord,⁷⁰ and every lord is servant to his servants.⁷¹ He graciously puts great things in the reach of all, for he measures work, not by the amount done, but by the heart of the worker;⁷² and the Hall of Fame in his kingdom he fills with heroes who served so humbly and so simply that they are themselves surprised at their own exaltation.⁷³

V. One other thing remains to be said. Confusion has grown up in the minds of many from the fact that Jesus seems to use the expression, "kingdom of God," in a double sense. Often he speaks of it as a kingdom to be immediately set up. It is "at hand";⁷⁴ it has "come nigh";⁷⁵ it is "within you."⁷⁶ Again he uses it as if it would only be realized with his glorious return on the clouds of heaven.⁷⁷ This confusion is at once removed by the consideration that the kingdom is not two, but one. The kingdom of God, which has already been set up, will be gloriously rounded out later;

⁷⁰ John xv. 15.

⁷¹ John xiii. 14, 15.

⁷² Mark xii. 43.

⁷³ Matt. xxv. 37-40; xxvi. 13.

⁷⁴ Matt. iv. 17.

⁷⁵ Luke x. 11.

⁷⁶ Luke xvii. 21.

⁷⁷ Matt. xvi. 27, 28.

but a man that is in the kingdom, is in the kingdom. We are serving now in a distant province. We shall be members of the home government ere long. The Lamb is my light. He also is the light of the eternal city.⁷⁸ Jesus is my King, and please God, I shall have none other. He is my King for ever and ever. Let us not treat him as only heir-apparent to the throne, but let us have a coronation day, when we shall take him as King of our hearts and King of our lives. Jesus labored, believing that he would inherit a glorious kingdom.⁷⁹ Let him have it.

⁷⁸ Rev. xxi. 23.

⁷⁹ John xviii. 37.

IX.

THE KINGDOM IN THE WORLD.

“As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.”—JOHN xvii. 18; xx. 21.

MY kingdom is not of this world,¹ saith the King, yet here we are, both in the kingdom and in the world.² The lord of this world also has his servants here.³ Some of the world's folk have taken color from basking in the light of the kingdom,⁴ and some of the children of the kingdom have not fully cast off their old livery.⁵ Worse than this, some of those who claim to belong to the kingdom are deceived,⁶ and deceive others; and some who truly believe have hid the fact within their own bosoms.⁷ We are confused, but the faith of Jesus is clear.⁸

A comprehensive confession of his faith on this point may be found in the seventeenth

¹ John xviii. 36.

² John xvii. 11.

³ John xv. 19.

⁴ Matt. xxiii. 27, 28. ⁵ Mark viii. 24. ⁶ Matt. vii. 22, 23.

⁷ John xii. 42; xix. 38.

⁸ John vi. 64.

chapter of John. His prayer is what he believed, and this is that for which he prayed: a people chosen, changed, prepared, sent out among enemies, kept for a definite purpose. He knew the intimacies of human life; he had felt the temperature of the world; he believed in the Father's promise to give to him and to his people a kingdom; and he had definite ideas as to how that kingdom should be won.

I. The intimacies of life.

The line that separates his people from the people of the world, though perfectly distinct to him, is obscure to the eyes of other men, and very crooked. In and out it runs, dividing father from child,⁹ friend from friend,¹⁰ brother from brother,¹¹ citizen from citizen,¹² business partner from business partner.¹³ So intertwined are the two peoples that it would work great injury to his own violently to separate them now.¹⁴ The great institutions of life, the family¹⁵ and the state,¹⁶ derive their authority and permanence, not from any other source than God; and men, by entering his

⁹ Matt. x. 35.

¹⁰ Luke xvii. 34.

¹¹ Matt. x. 21.

¹² Matt. x. 11.

¹³ Luke xvii. 35.

¹⁴ Matt. xiii. 29.

¹⁵ Matt. xix. 4-6.

¹⁶ John xix. 11.

kingdom, cease not to be men, and escape no duty that is reasonable and becoming to other men.¹⁷ His service begets no mean spirit. His men pay their dues to all,¹⁸ and they are bound by greater ties than other men, for since Jesus has spoken, they do these things religiously.

II. The world, however, is inclement. Sometimes the kingdom makes a stir, and men endeavor with all their might to rush into it;¹⁹ but usually the world is indifferent or hostile. The worldly man really does not understand the nature and blessings of Christ's kingdom;²⁰ his heart constitutes an unresponsive soil, like the surface of a rock.²¹ To such men the invitations given and the provisions made have no attractions.²² They see no treasure hid within this field,²³ and though they be indefinitely seeking something that will make them rich, they have not come as yet to see it here.²⁴ It matters not who the messenger is, or whether he speak loud or soft, it is all one to them.²⁵

¹⁷ Matt. xxii. 21.

¹⁸ Matt. xvii. 24-27.

¹⁹ Matt. xi. 12.

²⁰ Matt. xiii. 13-17.

²¹ Matt. xiii. 5.

²² Matt. xxii. 2-6.

²³ Matt. xiii. 44.

²⁴ Matt. xiii. 45.

²⁵ Matt. xi. 16-19.

This indifference often passes into active hostility. Jesus was not like the world, and the world hated him.²⁶ Jesus rebuked the world, and the world resented it.²⁷ His very presence was oftentimes not desired; it was taken as an interference.²⁸ When Jesus has taken certain men of the world and made them like himself, the world, being the same old world, hates in his people the same things which it hated in him.²⁹ If his people, for righteousness or for mercy's sake, interfere with business, men wish to drive them out. Even their presence in certain places is sharply resented. If they are loyal to Jesus, they, like him, are not wanting for a day in the Gadarene country.³⁰ In 1887 a white-skinned sea captain, who plied between Yokohama and Shanghai, would not have a missionary to sit at his table, and said that Japan was a heathen country, and he desired it to remain so. Times actually come when it is proper to say that the relation of the subjects of the two kingdoms is like the relation between the wolf and the

²⁶ John xv. 24.²⁷ John vii. 7.²⁸ Mark i. 24.²⁹ John xv. 18-20.³⁰ Matt. viii. 34.

lamb.³¹ At such times the world persecutes and kills and destroys;³² at other times it uses blandishments to seduce the weak and cause them to stumble.³³ Jesus, instead of delivering his people at once from dangers like these (a thing he does in a few cases), sends them back and leaves them in this troubled, hostile country.³⁴

III. His purposes are two:

1. That these men of his may grow. The world of men is to them like the earth is to seed, a place to grow in;³⁵ and only when they have ripened to his mind, and the harvest-time has come, will he send forth the reapers.³⁶ A man when Jesus finds him is in many ways like the prince of this world, whom he has been serving.³⁷ His new destiny culminates in likeness to the new Prince who has redeemed him.³⁸ The transforming life is planted in his heart by divine power,³⁹ fed by divine truth⁴⁰ and nurtured by all the resources of divine

³¹ Luke x. 3.

³² John x. 8-10.

³³ Matt. xxii. 16; xviii. 7-9.

³⁴ Luke viii. 38, 39.

³⁵ Matt. xiii. 23; Mark iv. 26-28.

³⁶ Matt. xiii. 30.

³⁷ John viii. 38.

³⁸ John xvii. 16, 24.

³⁹ John xvii. 2.

⁴⁰ John xvii. 17.

grace.⁴¹ Even the storms and winters of the hostile world tend in some strange way to its advantage.⁴² The season of growth is not of equal length in all.⁴³ And, as some believers enter at once into glory,⁴⁴ we can conceive of this work being done for all, by other means and in sunnier fields than this dark world affords. God has ways of developing a man, though the man die as soon as he is born into the kingdom. But there is another work which, as far as we know, must be done here upon the earth and through the ministry of human lives, and so —

2. His great purpose in sending them forth was, that others might come to know and to believe in him.⁴⁵ His kingdom grows by accretions from the world, and he trains some of his followers to cultivate hearts instead of fields,⁴⁶ and to fish for men instead of fishes.⁴⁷ It bore upon the heart of Jesus that his own labors did not bring more victories,⁴⁸ but he

⁴¹ Luke xiii. 8; John xv. 2.

⁴² Matt. v. 11, 12.

⁴³ Compare the brothers James and John.

⁴⁴ Luke xxiii. 43.

⁴⁵ John xx. 21-23; xv. 27.

⁴⁶ John iv. 35-38.

⁴⁷ Matt. iv. 19.

⁴⁸ Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xvi. 17.

believed — believed in such a way as to cheer him — that his chosen men would do greater things than he had done,⁴⁹ and would carry the good news of the kingdom to the utmost bound of earth;⁵⁰ that the growth of his kingdom would be marvellous,⁵¹ and would ultimately affect the whole mass of men.⁵² Jesus died for the world, and he intends to win the world.⁵³ If his people are worthy and united, men will come to believe that God sent him, and will believe on him.⁵⁴ Aye, on him shall even the Gentiles come to place their trust.⁵⁵ The King was to overthrow Satan's kingdom by drawing all men unto himself.⁵⁶ If he fails in this, the rest of his work fails. When, therefore, he goes away, and leaves the work undone, he sends his followers forth to do the "greater works" of which he spake.⁵⁷ Jesus did not desire simply to make a proclamation and stop; he wished to win men. "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."⁵⁸ He goes after that which is lost "until he find it."⁵⁸

⁴⁹ John xiv. 12.⁵⁰ Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts i. 8.⁵¹ Matt. xiii. 31, 32.⁵² Matt. xlii. 33.⁵³ John xii. 32.⁵⁴ John xviii. 21.⁵⁵ Comp. Matt. xii. 21; Luke iv. 24-27.⁵⁶ John xiv. 12.⁵⁷ Luke xv. 2.⁵⁸ Luke xv. 4.

To this end his people in the world should be —

(a) Free men. He whose heart is set upon what the world holds, and whose expectations are towards such honors as the world can give, is not free for the service of this new King.⁵⁹ In order that men may serve Jesus well, he teaches that they must seek the honor which comes from God only, and be content with that.⁶⁰ No ill treatment on the part of the world can ever surprise the man who has attentively considered the warnings of Jesus; he has only to “remember” what his Lord has said.⁶¹ No ill treatment that the world can bring can make this man afraid.⁶² Faith in God and fear do not dwell in the same breast.⁶³ One of the strange things that Jesus can do is to fill a heart with permanent peace, and with the sweetest kind of joy, though that heart be pressed on every side and Jesus be its only friend. “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Matt. vi. 24.

⁶⁰ John v. 44.

⁶¹ John xvi. 1-4.

⁶² Matt. x. 28.

⁶³ Matt. x. 29-33.

⁶⁴ John xvi. 33.

But it is not only the fear of the world which keeps a man in bondage, and incapacitates him for this other service; the rewards which the world gives also enslave him.⁶⁵ How can a man in the pay of the world serve truly the kingdom of Christ? The lust of gain and the love of riches are fatal. "Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!"⁶⁶ "The care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word."⁶⁷ "So, therefore, whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."⁶⁸ No rule that Jesus lays down seems more unrelenting than this — the worshipper of gold cannot be his disciple. Here is something from which his people must be free. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."⁶⁹

This does not mean that his servants must live in poverty. Many of his most faithful followers were householders,⁷⁰ and some of them were rich enough to minister unto him of their substance.⁷¹ Even a costly burial could be af-

⁶⁵ Matt. vi. 19-24.

⁶⁶ Mark x. 24.

⁶⁷ Matt. xiii. 22.

⁶⁸ Luke xiv. 33.

⁶⁹ Matt. vi. 24.

⁷⁰ John xix. 27.

⁷¹ Luke viii. 3.

forded him by a rich man who truly believed.⁷² It does mean, however, that their hearts shall not hold these things too dear. Possession is no sin, but slavery to possession is. Jesus must be both the Lord of his people and the Lord of what they possess. This is shown by the circumstance that the only one on whom he laid the command, "Sell ALL that thou hast and distribute unto the poor," proved his need of just that command by his inability to do it.⁷³ If his heart had been free from bondage to his estates, the command would have been no more necessary for him than it was for the loving family at Bethany.⁷⁴ The spirit of Christ's man must be free at every cost. The world must not command him; Christ is his Master. If to purchase this freedom it is necessary for any given man to sell all, why then he must sell, or else he cannot be his disciple.⁷⁵ The Roman army officer had wonderful faith and kept his office.⁷⁶ Peter,⁷⁷ Levi⁷⁸ and John⁷⁹ followed their Lord, but did not sell their houses. There is no virtue in wealth, and there

⁷² Matt. xxviii. 55-60.⁷³ Luke xviii. 18-23.⁷⁴ John xii. 1, 2.⁷⁵ Luke xiv. 26-33.⁷⁶ Matt. viii. 5-13.⁷⁷ Matt. viii. 14.⁷⁸ Luke v. 29.⁷⁹ John xix. 27.

is no virtue in poverty, only the poor man, having no master that takes up all his love, is freer to take on the service of Christ.⁸⁰ There is no sin in poverty, and there is no sin in wealth; only the rich man feels no need, and already has a master that takes up all his heart.⁸¹ Christ's servant, whether he be poor or rich, must be free. If the rich be free, they are a blessing to the poor,⁸² and the free poor man can often help in noblest ways the rich man who is a slave, and restless and alone.⁸³

(b) These people, being free from the world, should be loyal to their new King. Under this head may be gathered all those conceptions of Jesus as to the method by which his kingdom shall meet and overcome the world. A true loyalty to Christ would lead his servants to confine the sphere of his kingdom as he confined it. His being the Messiah did not thereby constitute him a civil judge.⁸⁴ Some things he came to do, others he did not come to do. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."⁸⁵ "God sent not the

⁸⁰ Mark x. 24.

⁸¹ Luke xii. 19.

⁸² Luke xii. 33.

⁸³ Luke xix. 1-10.

⁸⁴ Luke xii. 14.

⁸⁵ Matt. xx. 28.

Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him.”⁸⁶ He was not an overturner of civil governments. Even Pilate was to him a lawful governor, and he stood before his bar.⁸⁷ No one could stop him in what he came to do,⁸⁸ but he did not, as a man, embrace within himself all offices.⁸⁴ Similarly, his people are not “of the world,”⁸⁹ and are not over the world,⁹⁰ but are “in the world.”⁹¹ In the last analysis they have no Master but Christ.⁹² But this does not entitle them to be civil judges,⁸⁴ or constitute them lords of all the affairs of men.

A true loyalty to Christ would lead his servants to extend the sphere of his kingdom as he extended it. This means to despise no man, and to despair of no man.⁹³ The darkest place is the place most in need of light. These servants are light-bearers. “Men loved the darkness.”⁹⁴ “And he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.”⁹⁵ “YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.”⁹⁶ Jesus loves

⁸⁶ John iif. 17. ⁸⁷ John xix. 10, 11. ⁸⁸ Luke xiii. 31-33.

⁸⁴ Luke xii. 14. ⁸⁹ John xv. 19. ⁹⁰ Matt. xxiii. 8-12.

⁹¹ John xvii. 11. ⁹² Matt. xxiii. 10. ⁹² Matt. xxiii. 10.

⁹³ Luke vi. 35. ⁹⁴ John iii. 19. ⁹⁵ John xii. 35.

⁹⁶ Matt. v. 14.

the world, and died for the world, and into the world they must go, that the world may know and believe.⁹⁷ Nothing but lack of faith, either in the love or in the power of Jesus, will ever make them turn back. Jesus never found even in Judea a sinner too vile for him to save; and there is no one from whom his church has a right to turn away.⁹⁸ Moreover, the field of his activity is the whole world,⁹⁹ and no man has a right to restrict it by high or low, by near or far away. "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."¹⁰⁰

A true loyalty to Christ would shut out forever all worldly or unworthy means of winning men. What has the church done when by the world she has won the world? Has any change been wrought? Are the men not worldly still? Jesus bowed not down before Satan, though, in a sense, it would have given him the world.¹⁰¹ He did not want the world as it was. If he must change to a worldling in order to win it, the world would be the

⁹⁷ John xvii. 21, 23. ⁹⁸ Luke xv. 1, 2. ⁹⁹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

¹⁰⁰ Acts i. 8.

¹⁰¹ Matt. iv. 9, 10.

world still. If it come not lawfully he prefers that it come not at all.¹⁰² He makes no compromises nor alliances with Satan. He shows a square front and an honest breast to all the opposition that he meets.¹⁰³ A kingdom that is not different from the world is not his kingdom.¹⁰⁴ A kingdom won by worldly means is still a worldly kingdom.¹⁰⁵ Not such a kingdom is his, and not by such means is it advanced. He commissions his servants to go forth armed with a beautiful harmlessness to interfere with the ignorance and sin of this stricken world.¹⁰⁶ They go to preach,¹⁰⁷ to teach,¹⁰⁸ to bear witness,¹⁰⁹ to live,¹¹⁰ to shine,¹¹¹ and thus to lift the clouds of darkness and of misery that oppress the nations. If they lose their distinctive character, they accomplish nothing. If they are faithful, they shall gradually salt the whole mass of men with the delicious flavor of the Christ-life.¹¹²

(c) Being free to do this work, these men must not only be loyal to Christ, they must also

¹⁰² John vi. 36-40. ¹⁰³ Matt. xii. 25-30. ¹⁰⁴ John xviii. 36.

¹⁰⁵ John xv. 19. ¹⁰⁶ Matt. x. 16. ¹⁰⁷ Matt. x. 7.

¹⁰⁸ Matt. xxviii. 20. ¹⁰⁹ John xv. 27. ¹¹⁰ John xv. 5.

¹¹¹ Matt. v. 16. ¹¹² Matt. v. 13.

catch the Christ-spirit. The men who walked with Jesus from day to day found this very hard to do, and were constantly breaking out in tempers unharmonious with his.¹¹³ It may be harder for us than it was for them to find this spirit and to hold it against the world. The kingdom ought to be permeated with the spirit of the King,¹¹⁴ and his people are to expect no more from the world than he received.¹¹⁵ To begin with, Jesus did not conceive his kingdom to be an incubus upon mankind, to be supported by unwilling gifts or taxes. His friends supported him;¹¹⁶ he fed the strangers who flocked about him.¹¹⁷ He maintained his independence, his self-respect and public respect.¹¹⁸ He shunned no obligation for the purpose of saving a little money.¹¹⁹ Even a king could not with attentions buy his silence,¹²⁰ but the poor were aided by his gifts.¹²¹

In sending out other men to work in his name, he authorizes them to receive the willing

¹¹³ Mark ix. 33-37; Luke ix. 54, 55. ¹¹⁴ John xiii. 15, 16.

¹¹⁵ John xv. 20. ¹¹⁶ Luke viii. 3. ¹¹⁷ Matt. xiv. 16.

¹¹⁸ John viii. 46. ¹¹⁹ Matt. xvii. 24-27.

¹²⁰ Comp. Luke ix. 9; xiii. 31, 32. ¹²¹ John xiii. 29.

gifts of those among whom they labor; ¹²² but it is only on the principle of equivalent service having been rendered. "The laborer is worthy of his hire." ¹²² No idler can claim a crust under that rule. It means work, work, work. If they have not rendered service, they are unworthy of hire, and ought not to expect it. Later, he instructs these same men, in order to insure their independence, to take with them whatever of worldly goods they may possess. ¹²³ The kingdom is a true blessing to the nation in which it is found, and to whatever nation it may be transferred. ¹²⁴ It does not absorb, it gives. ¹²⁵ No species of mean cringing nor of fawning dependence is compatible with the dignity of the King nor of his servants. ¹²⁶

The men of the kingdom, standing thus upon their feet, need in their work two other points of likeness to Jesus. They must have a love that forgets all injuries and is equal to all the burdens that shall come. ¹²⁷ No resentment must burn against those who have ill-used

¹²² Luke x. 7.

¹²³ Luke xxii. 36.

¹²⁴ Matt. xxi. 43.

¹²⁵ Matt. x. 8.

¹²⁶ Matt. x. 24-33.

¹²⁷ Luke vi. 27-36.

the cause they love.¹²⁸ If a man believe not, still must they labor on.¹²⁹ Let the world hate and persecute and kill, they, for the sake of Jesus, must love and forgive and serve.¹³⁰ The kingdom is to the world as Jesus was, the light,¹³¹ and the duties of the men of the kingdom are like the duties of Jesus, to live, and to suffer, and, if need be, to die to win the world.¹³²

This leads to the second point of likeness. To do this work, men must, like Jesus, feel a great compassion for the lost.¹³³ "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields."¹³⁴ The kingdom does not occupy an humble station, from which she looks up and asks favors. She sees the whole world as a shepherdless mass, and her heart is stirred like the heart of her Lord.¹³⁵ How beautiful is the compassion of Jesus, and how like Jesus is the unselfish compassion of a redeemed man! The tender heart of the summer cloud is moved in pity for the parched earth, and she opens her bosom and

¹²⁸ Luke ix. 54, 55.¹²⁹ John xii. 46, 47.¹³⁰ Matt. v. 44, 45.¹³¹ Matt. v. 14.¹³² John xx. 21.¹³³ Matt. ix. 36-38.¹³⁴ John iv. 35.

pours out her very substance upon the thirsty ground; and thus the kingdom of Jesus blesses with the riches of her very soul the barren wastes of human life. If all the members of this glorious kingdom could thus live and love and labor in the world — could all be united,¹³⁵ in answer to the prayer of Jesus; could all be filled with the Holy Spirit,¹³⁶ whose work is the same as theirs¹³⁷ — we might with good reason hope to see that other prayer of Jesus answered, too: “That the world may believe that thou didst send me.”¹³⁵ There is so much of the mass of men that has not been leavened yet.¹³⁸ There are so many birds that have not come to know where this great tree is growing and stretching forth its goodly branches.¹³⁹ O Lord God! remember still the prayer of Jesus.

¹³⁵ John xvii. 21. ¹³⁶ Luke xxiv. 49. ¹³⁷ John xv. 26, 27.

¹³⁸ Matt. xiii. 33.

¹³⁹ Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

X.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

“And the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form as a dove upon him.”—LUKE iii. 22.

PRAYER. Oh! thou whose gracious task it is to lead us into all truth, for Jesus' sake, lead us into the truth concerning thyself.

The story of man's creation suggests to us a plurality of counsellors in the stupendous work;¹ and the story of man's redemption — a work of greater cost by far — opens with a like revelation.² By the brink of Jordan three persons appear: Jesus, not fully learned in his Father's will, and unseasoned to the temptations and burdens that make the climate of this world; the Holy Spirit, descending in bodily form out of heaven, to light on him, and become his guide and helper; and God the Father, speaking with a voice that men could hear, and owning this man Jesus for a Son

¹ Gen. i. 26.

² Matt. iii. 16, 17.

and his work as well pleasing in his sight. We have seen how Jesus believed in his Father,³ and how he also believed in his own dignity and success as the divine Redeemer⁴ — but who is this third blessed One that here appears? And what is his work? And how can he come upon men? And what is the power which his coming brings?

We are not permitted to doubt the existence of such a Being, for Jesus, after seeing him come down out of the rent heavens⁵ — fit symbol of the veil that divides this world from that — having known the urging of that Spirit upon his own heart as he led him forth into the wilderness,⁶ and having in time of trial felt the support of the world's Comforter, who was first a Comforter to him,⁷ and having returned into Galilee filled with a consciousness of new power,⁴ enters the synagogue and makes the distinct claim that this Spirit of God is still upon him.⁸ God has anointed him for a specific and mighty work; and whether the "because" in Luke iv. 18 ("The Spirit of the Lord

³ Chap. II. ⁴ Chap. VI. ⁵ Matt. iii. 16. ⁶ Mark i. 12.

⁷ Luke iv. 1.

⁸ Luke iv. 18, 21.

is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor") mean that the work was of such a kind that the call to it proved the possession of the Divine Spirit, or whether it mean that the conscious possession of the Spirit proved the call to the work, we are not at pains to decide. It is insisted, however, that Jesus saw and felt and claimed the existence of this Holy Spirit of God. As we proceed to ask certain questions about the Holy Spirit, and endeavor to answer them, we implore his guidance, and devoutly pray that we may at least be saved from offending him.

I. The first question, then, is, Who is this Spirit whom our Saviour distinguishes from God the Father and from himself? And the answer is, He is a DIVINE PERSON. In this answer there are really two points, his divinity and his personality. The proof of one lies neighbor to the proof of the other, for the works assigned to him forbid that he be less than divine,⁹ and the way in which he is described as performing those works excludes every idea except that of personal agency.¹⁰

⁹ John iii. 5.

¹⁰ Luke xii. 10, 12.

The baptismal formula itself embraces both ideas, for in that formula he stands equal to and distinct from the Father and the Son.¹¹ Nor must it be forgotten that in describing him the evangelist uses masculine pronouns, when mere grammatical rules would require the pronoun to be neuter.¹² He saves his theology at the expense of his grammar.

This point is so generally admitted by the church to-day that nothing beyond this simple reminder of the usual line of proof will be needed to win the consent of men to the statement that the Holy Spirit is a divine person. What seems to be needed now is to reckon this position a fundamental one. He is a person as truly as God the Father, or as Jesus Christ is a person, and this fact must control the answer to any other questions that may be asked about his work or indwelling. Everything that is said about the Holy Spirit must be said with his personality in view, and the form of every statement must be consistent with this eminent characteristic.

II. In the view of Jesus, what work belongs

¹¹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

¹² John xvi. 13, 14.

to the Holy Spirit? In answering this question, it is allowable to combine in one view two distinct things, the work that he did for Jesus, and the work which he will do for other men — for Jesus was a man, and the Spirit that wrought in him is the same that works in us, and the efficacy of his working cannot be better shown than in the full perfection of his energy as found in the life of Jesus Christ. There is a marked difference between the man who came to John to be baptized in the Jordan¹³ and the man who, in the power of the Spirit, returned into Galilee;¹⁴ but even this difference does not measure the gulf that separates between two certain points in a common man's life — the one when he is a child of the devil, and doing the lusts of his father,¹⁵ and the other when he is a son of the Lord God Almighty,¹⁶ with the likeness of God stamped upon him.

The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin,¹⁷ and leads to Jesus;¹⁸ he is the author of the new birth,¹⁹ the enlightener of the mind,²⁰ the

¹³ Matt. iii. 13, 15.

¹⁴ Luke iv. 14.

¹⁵ John viii. 44.

¹⁶ John i. 12, 13; iif. 5.

¹⁷ John xvi. 8.

¹⁸ John xv. 26.

¹⁹ John iii. 5.

²⁰ John xvi. 12, 13.

guide,²¹ counsellor,²² teacher²³ and sanctifier²⁴ of believers; he anoints with authority and power for special work;²⁵ he speaks through human lips;²¹ he is the agent by whom the testimony of men is made efficient.²⁶ In a word, he does what Jesus would do if in human form he still stood among his friends, and does it more effectively. Jesus had helped them, pleading with them for God,²⁷ and with God for them.²⁸ He had answered for them the criticisms of their enemies.²⁹ He had held them to himself with words of warning³⁰ and words of hope.³¹ He had been a present help, a paraclete — and the Holy Spirit was to be “another,” and a more efficient one, by reason of his freedom from certain limitations that belonged to Jesus as a man. He is to abide with them, and lead them till need of leading is felt no more. “I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever.”³² And so, “It is expedient for you that I go away.”³³ It will

²¹ Matt. x. 19, 20.²² John xiv. 6, 7.²³ John xiv. 26.²⁴ Comp. John xvii. 17; xvi. 13.²⁵ Acts i. 8.²⁶ John xv. 26, 27.²⁷ John xv.²⁸ John xvii.²⁹ Mark vii. 1-15.³⁰ Matt. v. 20.³¹ Luke xviii. 30.³² John xiv. 16.³³ John xvi. 7.

be seen that to perform these tasks always and everywhere, nothing short of a divine person, with divine intelligence and divine power, will suffice. While if he be as Jesus taught, a true person thus gloriously exalted and endowed, he is abundantly competent to undertake these offices — offices which belong not to a blind energy or influence — and to fill them with success.

III. What is meant by “receiving the Holy Spirit,” ³⁴ or, “the Holy Spirit coming upon you”? ³⁵ Certainly, everything that is taught is consistent with the personality of the Holy Spirit, nor can he be given nor received, except as a divine person, for this he is. It is true that he may manifest his presence in different ways, and in varying degrees of clearness; but all the while it is he that possesses the life and divides the gifts on different days, or to different individuals, as he please. Thus he was in the hearts of the believing apostles from the time of their new birth, ³⁶ but Jesus, on leaving them, breathed upon them and said, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit,” ³⁷ doubtless as

³⁴ John xx. 22. ³⁵ Acts i. 8. ³⁶ John iii. 5. ³⁷ John xx. 22.

a spirit of understanding, "opening their minds." ³⁸ But, even after this, there rested on them the command to tarry at Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit should come upon them as a spirit of power for the work assigned, ³⁹ namely, witnessing to Jesus and his resurrection. "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses." ⁴⁰

It is not, then, a new portion of him that comes, but rather the same gracious Person, coming with a new gift. We are taught to pray, not for his influence, but for him, ⁴¹ and all those expressions which would seem to divide or portion out the Spirit of God are unscriptural. No one partitions the Saviour, and no intelligent Christian prays for a part of his sacrifice or blood to be applied to him. Nor are we to divide or measure the Holy Spirit. He, the adorable, intelligent, entire Person that he is, takes up his throne in the hearts of men, and on one bestows a gift of speech, ⁴² on another a gift of understanding, ⁴³ and on another

³⁸ Luke xxiv. 45.

³⁹ Luke xxiv. 49.

⁴⁰ Acts. i. 8.

⁴¹ Luke xi. 13.

⁴² Matt. x. 21.

⁴³ John xiv. 26.

a gift of joy⁴⁴ or of power;⁴⁰ and when he opens his hand to bestow these gifts, or comes afresh to bear some new gift,³⁹ he is ever the one, undivided Spirit of God. The words in John iii. 34 ("For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for he giveth not the Spirit by measure") are not regarded as contrary to this view, for the contrast in that connection is not between Christ and lesser messengers, but between the words of the messenger and the words of God. He whom God hath sent speaketh words that are really God's words, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure, so that one may say this message is half human and half divine. He that has, and speaks by the Spirit, speaks by a person who is divine and undivided — speaks indeed the words of God, and God is true. Just how this divine Person comes into a human life and influences that life may be as hard for us to explain as it would be to show how one human spirit stands near to and influences another; but we are not endeavoring explanations — the effort is to set forth facts, and these facts are

⁴⁴ John xiv. 16, 17; xv. 11.

⁴⁰ Acts i. 8.

³⁹ Luke xxiv. 49.

abundantly established in the teachings of Jesus and in human experience.

IV. What is meant by the "power" which one receives by the coming of the Holy Spirit? Here, again, the foundation fact that the Spirit is a person must give character to any view that is held, and, therefore, it cannot be true that this power is a sort of energy or heavenly electricity that is subject to the will and direction of its human possessor. So far from this being true, it is the gracious prerogative of this divine Person to oppose the will of the man whom he possesses, and by his great power to direct that human will into new channels. He is opposed to man's ignorance, and teaches him.⁴⁵ He is opposed to man's love of sin,⁴⁶ and weans him away from it. He is opposed to man's rebellion, and subdues him.⁴⁷ He is the master, not man. He leads, and if that fails, directs.⁴⁸ Never is he described as a something which I may use; he is a Somebody that can use me.⁴⁸ Never are we to conceive that he puts infinite power under the control of

⁴⁵ Comp. Luke xxiv. 25; John xvi. 12, 13. ⁴⁶ John xvi. 8.

⁴⁷ Comp. Luke xii. 11, 12; xxi. 14, 15.

⁴⁸ Acts viii. 29; xvi. 6, 7.

human intelligence. He abdicates his throne of authority in favor of none, nor does he lend without reserve his resistless power to puny men.

What does Jesus mean, then, by a man being "clothed with power"? The prophecy, or promise, is best understood by the method of the fulfilment. What Jesus gave is what he meant to give. A study of The Acts will show that the Holy Spirit did not use men as depositaries of a mysterious energy to be expended on other men. He simply took possession of men separately, and wrought upon them each for himself, showing his presence by giving new powers, or new energy to existing powers, in the life of the men upon whom he came. In The Acts v. 32 the work of the apostles and the work of the Spirit are not identical, but distinct: "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him." If the exigencies required that a man speak with tongues, the divine Spirit enabled him to do that,⁴⁹ but the hearing ear, and the under-

⁴⁹ Acts ii. 4.

standing mind, were separate gifts.⁵⁰ If a man's duty was to be a witness to Jesus, the possession of "the power" simply meant that the blessed Spirit gave him skill to present a testimony clear and full.⁵¹ The believing heart was a separate and direct gift. If the man's business was to work a miracle, the Spirit of God by his personal indwelling decided the occasion, directed the method of the doing, and put forth, apart from the man's strength, his own creative power to make good a plan and a word of his own choosing. Thus Peter, miraculously taught and led by the Spirit, preaches in the house of Cornelius, and speaks with the Spirit's power. But the statement is, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word;"⁵² and we may select for illustration two accounts of the preaching of the Apostle Paul, a man full of the Holy Spirit.⁵³ In one case, a multitude believed,⁵⁴ and in the other the people were so enraged that they wished, like beasts, to tear him in pieces.⁵⁵ Paul's testimony was

⁵⁰ Acts xi. 15-18.

⁵¹ Acts v. 1-16.; vii.

⁵² Acts x. 44.

⁵³ Acts ix. 17.

⁵⁴ Acts xiv. 1.

⁵⁵ Acts xxii. 23.

at both times the testimony of a man clothed with power, and full of the Holy Spirit. The difference in results did not depend on him, and were certainly not designed by him. The very last account that we have of a sermon by him shows that a cause beyond his control determined the result. With impartial mind he pleads with an assembled company, "and some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved." ⁵⁶

The "power" which Jesus promised them, and which he gave, was not an edged tool with which men might work at will, but was the personal energy of God's Spirit put forth upon the natural and gracious powers of men, enabling them to do or to suffer his revealed will. A divine Person,⁵⁷ giver of life ⁵⁸ and graces through the knowledge of Jesus,⁵⁹ and coming as an abiding helper upon his people,⁶⁰ and filling them by his presence with all necessary power for growth and work,⁶¹ this Jesus conceived the Holy Spirit to be. This is the One whose coming would make up for the depar-

⁵⁶ Acts xxviii. 24.

⁵⁷ John xvi. 13, 14.

⁵⁸ John xv. 26.

⁵⁹ John xiv. 16.

⁶⁰ John iii. 5.

⁶¹ Acts i. 8.

ture of Jesus;⁶² and certain it is that we lose nothing by his view, for the Spirit himself is greater and more to be desired than any gift that he bestows.

V. Does Jesus give a test by which the Spirit's indwelling may be known? Constantly he is described as doing things; and when we see his work, we may reasonably infer his presence. This may be done with as much certainty as one may feel in passing through a forest, and upon certain indications declaring that the lightning has struck this tree. The characteristic work of the Holy Spirit is thus defined, "HE SHALL GLORIFY ME."⁵⁹ This is done by leading to Jesus,⁶³ convicting concerning Jesus,⁶⁴ helping men to understand Jesus,⁵⁹ bringing Jesus to the remembrance of men,⁶⁵ and, in a word, exalting Jesus in the minds of men as the object of supreme desire and affection. This is the purpose of his mission, and any Spirit that does otherwise is not the one of whom Jesus spoke. The wonders and signs done in apostolic times were done in testimony

⁶² John xvi. 7.⁵⁹ John xvi. 13, 14.⁶³ Comp. John xii. 32; xvi. 13.⁶⁴ John xvi. 9.⁶⁵ John xiv. 26.

of Jesus, and in accrediting his witnesses.⁶⁶ The apostles did not glorify themselves as wonder-workers,⁶⁷ nor did they invite men to look to them as bringing in a new revelation. They, when filled with the Spirit, spoke of God's promises which he had fulfilled in sending Jesus,⁶⁸ of Jesus' work,⁶⁹ and of Jesus' promises.⁷⁰

Upon the hearts of the men of Christ the Spirit moves to fashion them after the likeness of their Lord, and to fit them for their work. Upon the world the same Spirit moves, lest the work of Jesus and the work of believers should fall to the ground. "He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you."⁷¹ "He will convict the world in respect of sin."⁷² Would you, then, look for the manifestation of the Spirit's presence? Find a sinner turning his weary face to God. Would you look further? Find you a Christ-like man, that is working for Christ, with a heart that gives Christ all the glory. "He shall glorify me,"⁷¹ and a Spirit-filled man will do the same.

⁶⁶ Acts iv. 29, 30.⁶⁷ Acts ii. 12, 13.⁶⁸ Acts iii. 25, 26.⁶⁹ Acts iii. 13, 18.⁷⁰ Acts ii. 33.⁷¹ John xvi. 14.⁷² John xvi. 8.

XI.

THE HOME-GOING.

"I leave the world, and go unto the Father."—JOHN
xvi. 28.

THE expectation of a glorious end removes the terrors from almost any journey. Jesus had left the Father and come into the world.¹ It was no hardship for him to make the return journey, for that would end where he began — in glory.² From the mountain-top he descends into the valley of this world; again he leaves the valley and returns to the mountain-top. The uncertainty which brings on most of the fear which his people feel had no place in his heart. To us, death is such a strange thing, and it comes so often to snatch our friends away, and we never see them any more. When the shadow of its wing comes between us and the light, shall we be afraid? How much would I give to know whither I

¹ John viii. 42; xvi. 28.

² John xvii. 5.

am going, and the way, and of what sort my own self shall be?

What we, unaided, cannot see, Jesus saw and believed, and out of his faith he teaches the world a most pleasing view of this great mystery. He had a Father,¹ and a Father's house,³ and when his definite work in this far-off land was done, he simply went back home. He knew whither he went: "I go unto him that sent me."⁴ "Father, I come to thee."⁵ Death, like a horrid portal, shuts out from our view the pleasure gardens of the King that lie beyond, and it is only the things on this side that seem of much account to us. Not so with Jesus. He speaks with equal certainty of the things that lie on both sides of the gate. The separation seems so slight that he could say to one who drew near to him on this side, that passing through together, they would still be near each other on the other side. "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom."⁶ "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."⁷

¹ John viii. 42; xvi. 28. ³ John xiv. 2. ⁴ John vii. 33.

⁵ John xvii. 11, ⁶ Luke xxiii. 42. ⁷ Luke xxiii. 43.

That Jesus did not fear death is too clear to demand extended proof. His life was something which for God's glory and man's good he could spend as he might spend any other precious possession.⁸ He was not forced to suffer what men conceive to be an irreparable loss,⁹ and he could have avoided making even such an outlay as he saw to be involved in the passing away of life.¹⁰ He had power to shake loose from the throats of other men the icy hand of death;¹¹ and he who could do this need not have died if he had been very much afraid. Things which bring terror to the mind do not cause gentle names to rise upon the lips. Men speak of the "king of terrors." Jesus says, "Our friend is fallen asleep."¹² A man folds his hands and says, "I die": Jesus says, "I go unto the Father."¹³ Men speak of the grave, and he of his "Father's house."¹⁴ Certain things about it, such as separation from friends,¹⁵ and physical suffering,¹⁶ were indeed painful; but in his view, it was not the one

⁸ John x. 15.⁹ John x. 18.¹⁰ Matt. xxvi. 53.¹¹ John xi. 43, 44.¹² John xi. 11.¹³ John xiv. 28.¹⁴ John xiv. 2.¹⁵ John xvi. 6.¹⁶ John xiv. 28.

who went away who was in need of comfort or of pity; it was they who remained behind, and had to wait and to endure.¹⁷

I. Jesus believed that to him death would bring no suspension of his being, or of his spiritual powers. Any man, in imagining his own death, feels that in the supreme moment he will be standing on one side to witness what is going on, and Jesus constantly speaks as if the passing away of his life would not touch for a moment the real part of him. There would be no break in consciousness, or in memory.¹⁸ He had been with the Father,¹⁹ and was now here; again, he leaves this place, and goes to the Father.²⁰ The same personality extends through the three stages of being. If consciousness were broken, he could not be sure of this. "I came out from the Father and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go unto the Father."²¹ Before coming into the world, he undertakes a work.²² In the world he does it.²³ And while here, he

¹⁷ Luke xxiii. 28. ¹⁸ Luke xxiii. 43. ¹⁹ John xvii. 5.

²⁰ John xvi. 10. ²¹ John xvi. 28. ²² John viii. 42; vi. 38.

²³ John viii. 28, 29.

does not hesitate to make promises which he, in the same personality, will make good when he is gone.²⁴ He will remember his friends. Their welfare will still engage him. "I go away,"²⁴ "but I will see you again."²⁵ "I will send you gifts to help you on;"²⁶ "I will prepare a place where I am to receive you."²⁷ And then, as if to prove his faith to the hearts of all who feared, he came back to his people, after death had done to him all that death could do, the same thoughtful, loving, brotherly man that he had been before.²⁸ His saying to the thief on the cross²⁹ prevents our thinking that there was any interruption of his conscious existence even during those three awful days of his hiding from the view of his living disciples.³⁰

II. Though there are certain manifest evil effects of death, Jesus believed none of them to be permanent. Friends are separated, but they are friends still. "Go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and

²⁴ John xvi. 7.²⁵ John xvi. 22.²⁶ John xiv. 13, 14.²⁷ John xiv. 2, 3.²⁸ John xxi. 9-14.²⁹ Luke xxiii. 43.³⁰ Luke xxiv. 21.

your Father, and my God and your God.”³¹ And the separation hath an end. “I come unto you.”³² “Thou shalt follow me afterwards.”³³ His own body would be subjected to a painful death, but he believed in his death no more certainly than he believed in his resurrection. “Having laid down my life, I have power to take it up again.”³⁴ There was an hour of the power of darkness,³⁵ but the suspicion that that hour might stretch out forever seems never to have come to him. “The third day” seems fixed in his heart.³⁶ Over and over he speaks of it. Let the intervening days be what death will make them, the third shall be what God will make it — a day of life, and light, and glory.

III. In this great matter Jesus believed concerning his people the same things which he believed concerning himself. All seems so indefinite to us that all seems dark. What if we could take into the make-up of our own souls the faith which Jesus pressed upon the heart of Martha — “Believest thou this?”³⁷ — that

³¹ John xx. 17.

³² John xiv. 18.

³³ John xlii. 36.

³⁴ John x. 17, 18.

³⁵ Luke xxii. 53.

³⁶ Matt. xx. 19.

³⁷ John xi. 26.

the man who by faith is bound to me is alive in such a sense that death itself cannot disturb the simple fact — he liveth.³⁸ Open thy soul's ear to receive another word, "Because I live, ye shall live also."³⁹

Omitting the one circumstance of his pre-existence with the Father, Jesus represents his people as sustaining to that heavenly country well-nigh all the relations which he sustained to it. Has he a Father there? So have they;⁴⁰ and they have a Father's house,⁴¹ and Jesus,⁴² and memory,⁴³ and love.⁴⁴ No break whatever is to come, in being or in consciousness;⁴⁵ certainly nothing occurs which can disturb their identity of person.⁴⁶ The same persons that go from this world are the persons who arrive in that.⁴⁷ The forces of death play about their feet — they rise not above their heads. "I go to the Father; ye shall follow," saith Jesus; and the believer is authorized by this faith of Jesus to knock at the grim gate of death, saying, Father, open to thy weary child, for I come to thee.

³⁸ John xi. 25, 26. ³⁹ John xiv. 19. ⁴⁰ John xx. 17.

⁴¹ John xiv. 2. ⁴² John xvii. 24. ⁴³ Matt. xxv. 34-40.

⁴⁴ John xii. 26; xiv. 23.

⁴⁵ Luke xxiii. 43.

⁴⁶ Matt. x. 32, 33.

⁴⁷ Matt. xvii. 3.

As for himself, so also for the believer, Jesus believed that all the ugly marks which the fingers of death could make were but temporary evils. "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live."⁴⁸ It might take his people longer to make some stages of the journey than it took him; but for them, too, there is a blessed "third day" of light and glory. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."⁴⁹ To the believer the same things will happen that have already happened to Jesus. The strong One who has walked that way before knows how to keep them safe.⁵⁰ The child in the arms of the father is as safe in the dark as in the day.

What, then, is death? Only a gate so narrow that no man can pass with any gross encumbrance. And what is the grave? Not an inn, where the believer passes a night as he journeys, but only a warehouse in which we store for a time our heavier possessions as we in haste pass on. He tells us not of the day of our departure, but his words are so tender,

⁴⁸ John xi. 25.⁴⁹ Matt. xiii. 43.⁵⁰ John xvii. 12, 24.

and his thoughts are so clear that this intervening time of separation should rather be our time of mourning.⁵¹ My Lover has gone into a distant land, to prepare a home where I may go and be with him forever.”⁵² When all is done, he will not even require me to follow him — to make the journey thither alone. He will come back again,⁵³ and help me all along the way. Father, in company with Jesus, I come to thee.

⁵¹ Matt. ix. 15.

⁵² John xiv. 2.

⁵³ John xiv. 3.

XII.

THE SECOND COMING.

"Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming in the clouds of heaven."—**MATT.** xxvi. 64.

"And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."—**MARK** xiii. 37.

IN this year of our Lord, 1905, the average believer has the hope of Christ's second coming but little in his thought. A minister who has been preaching the gospel for fifteen years states that he has never preached upon the subject. This indifference is accounted for in two ways: the worldly prosperity that has come to Christ's kingdom has made men feel that there is really no great need for better times; but the chief responsibility for this condition lies with those who have hotly engaged in unfortunate debates which should never have arisen about this great matter. Men have fixed upon certain dates for the reappearing of

Christ, and talked as if the truth of God was pledged to support their solution of the complex problem. They have even gone so far as to say that they would lose all faith in the gospel if their schedule were not followed. Some assert the day to be near, some that it is very far away — and thus the battle has gone on, the passing years putting many to shame, and the general effect upon the church being of such a kind that many devout men look with incredulity and lightness upon the whole subject. Let us, with unprejudiced minds, approach the gospels and see what Jesus believed.

I. THE FACT. Whatever events or portents may intervene between this time and that, whatever the order of these events may be, whatever periods of humiliation or of glory may come to the church, there is a day in which men "shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."¹ This is a part of our Saviour's testimony when under oath.² He believed it with all his heart, and we are no more permitted to doubt it than we are to doubt

¹ Matt. xxvi. 64.

² Matt. xxvi. 63.

the fact that he is the Messiah, and has come into the world once to suffer for our sins. The prophets,³ Jesus,⁴ the apostles,⁵ all classes of God's messengers, have a word concerning this great hope. Such a glorious manifestation of Christ is required for a true rounding out of the work that he has undertaken. No one can doubt that before all is done, the despised corner-stone shall, by God's almighty arm, be lifted into its proper place,⁶ and that men shall see it.⁷

This is not only a fact, but it is a distinct fact, and must not be confounded with anything else. Some are accustomed to say that death, the believers going to Christ, is practically the same for each man as the coming of Christ. This is not true. Death is seeming defeat:⁸ the coming of Christ is manifest victory.⁹ A disembodied spirit is not the same as a redeemed man.¹⁰ The body sown in weakness and corruption is not the same as the immortal, glorious body which God will give.¹¹

³ Dan. vii. 13, 14; Psa. cxviii. 22, 23. ⁴ Matt. xxiv. 30.

⁵ 1 Thess. iv. 16. ⁶ Matt. xxi. 33-42. ⁷ Rev. i. 7.

⁸ Luke xxii. 53; John xxi. 18, 19. ⁹ Matt. xiii. 43.

¹⁰ Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. ¹¹ 1 Cor. xv. 42-44.

At that time the carnival of death shall cease;¹² the grave shall disgorge and devour no more.¹³ A part of God's people will not be here, and a part there, but "one flock" shall they be,¹⁴ and all that offend shall depart from among them.¹⁵ A great uniting time,¹⁶ and a great separating time,¹⁷ will that be. And the King shall "sit on the throne of his glory,"¹⁸ no more misunderstood or despised, but come into his own at last, vindicated and glorified. However, or for how long his power and his grace may show themselves in the meantime, there shall come to him on that day his own proper station, and to men, the going away into "eternal punishment," or into the "life eternal."¹⁹

While Jesus believed in his return, and promised his return, and counted it a time of great glory to him and to his church, no one can read his confession before Caiaphas without feeling that in his assertion of a glorious vindication there is contained a warning to that wicked man. "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ,

¹² 1 Cor. xv. 54.¹³ John v. 28, 29.¹⁴ John x. 16; xvii. 20-24.¹⁵ Matt. xii. 41.¹⁶ Matt. xxv. 34.¹⁷ Matt. xxv. 41.¹⁸ Matt. xxv. 31.¹⁹ Matt. xxv. 46.

the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said; nevertheless, I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”²⁰ In view of that coming day, greatly to be pitied is the man who now thinks too little of Jesus Christ. Jesus is coming again with great power and glory.

II. The time undefined to all but God. The angels did not know it;²¹ Jesus as a man did not know it.²¹ Why, then, will those who are men and nothing more insist on finding out? The matter is purposely hid from us.²² Even the things which are spoken of as coming to pass beforehand are of such indefinite outline that they serve us not in fixing a date. Is it said that the gospel must first be published among all nations?²³ Who can use this as a measure? Has it already been published in the sense of the prophecy or not? Does any one know? Or the “times of the gentiles,”²⁴ or the people of Jerusalem changing their view,²⁵ — who can say what these things

²⁰ Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. ²¹ Matt. xxiv. 36. ²² Acts i. 7.

²³ Matt. xxiv. 14.

²⁴ Luke xxi. 24.

²⁵ Luke xiii. 34, 35; xvii. 22.

mean? The time is as indefinite to us as the time of our death is; not certainly far off, and not certainly near. Jesus spoke against two errors.

1. No one was to fix a near date, saying that the kingdom of God would "immediately appear,"²⁶ and on that account cease to work. There is time enough for the accomplishment of great things; time enough to do what he has given you to do.²⁷ You do not know when he is to come, therefore, so far from pausing, work the harder, that he may find you faithful.²⁸ Keep the sinews of your endeavor tense. "Let your loins be girded about and your lamps burning."²⁸ You know not the time. He comes like the lightning's flash.²⁹ Work on — publish forth his love, that the men in darkness may see the sunlight³⁰ before they see the lightning.³¹

2. No one is to fix a date in the far distance and say, "My Lord delayeth his coming."³² Is not this the sin of the church's present attitude toward this great matter? You do not

²⁶ Matt. xix. 11. ²⁷ Matt. xix. 12-26. ²⁸ Luke xii. 35-40.

²⁹ Matt. xxiv. 27. ³⁰ Matt. v. 14, 16. ³¹ Matt. xxiv. 27.

³² Luke xli. 45.

know, therefore, "what I say unto you I say unto all, *Watch!*"³³ The fact that the ten virgins did not know the time was no reason for sleeping. It was a reason for watching.³⁴ The thief is coming, you do not know the time, therefore go to sleep? No; therefore, Watch, says Christ.³⁵ Jesus gives absolutely no warrant for casting the great thought out of our minds, under the impression that his coming is yet a great way off. No one has a right to plan for one evil thing, believing that he will have time to finish it before his Lord returns,³⁶ and no one has a right to cease any work of service because he believes his Lord will not give him time to finish.³⁷ You know not the time, therefore labor on; you know not the time, therefore WATCH.

III. How will he come? In spite of the warnings Jesus had given, he believed that his actual coming would take men by surprise. As an animal walking along an accustomed path and suddenly striking a trap-stick, so will his coming be,³⁸ or like men engaged in ordinary

³³ Mark xiii. 37. ³⁴ Matt. xxv. 1-13. ³⁵ Matt. xxiv. 42-44.

³⁶ Luke xii. 45, 46. ³⁷ Luke xii. 35-38. ³⁸ Luke xxi. 34, 35.

business when the flood came and took them all away;³⁹ or like the men of Sodom on that awful night, when Lot fled, and the fire fell upon them.⁴⁰

Men have put the day a long way off, and are like cattle grazing upon the earth, with their gaze downward. If they would only prayerfully watch, they would not at sight of him flee away startled and surprised,⁴¹ but would be able to meet him with a calm courage. "Watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."⁴² He will come unexpectedly,⁴³ and he will come suddenly;⁴⁴ the warnings are given. The cloud may be a long time rising, but the lightning flash is a sudden thing. His coming will also be manifest and unmistakable.⁴⁵ The Son of man on the clouds of heaven will be a sight which friends and enemies alike shall see⁴⁵ — an event alone in the experience of the race, the beginning of the culmination of all hope, and of all fear. "Be-

³⁹ Matt. xxiv. 37-40.

⁴⁰ Luke xvii. 28-30.

⁴¹ Luke xxiii. 30; Rev. vi. 16.

⁴² Luke xxi. 36.

⁴³ Luke xxi. 34, 35.

⁴⁴ Matt. xxiv. 26, 27.

⁴⁵ Rev. i. 7.

fore him shall be gathered all the nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats.”⁴⁶

IV. What did Jesus believe to be the proper attitude of his people toward that great day? He speaks of urgent labor, that we be not unprepared, as one who is overtaken with his task half done,⁴⁷ and of never sleeping watchfulness, that we be not surprised, and fear come to us instead of joy.⁴⁸ But, besides all this, that great day of the Lord's return should be looked for with a great longing in the soul. It is the day when all our expectations for our friends, for ourselves, for Jesus, shall ripen into fruit; a day when the grave shall give back to us the glorified forms of those we love,⁴⁹ a day when we, too, shall be changed,⁵⁰ and, above all, a day when the great joy of seeing Jesus crowned before the world shall fill the heart.⁵¹ What comes to me will give not half so much of joy as shall spring from seeing what shall come to him.⁵² His followers will

⁴⁶ Matt. xxv. 32. ⁴⁷ Luke xii. 35-40. ⁴⁸ Matt. xxiv. 45-51.

⁴⁹ 1 Thess. iv. 14-17.

⁵⁰ 1 Cor. xv. 50, 52.

⁵¹ Matt. xxv. 31.

⁵² Rev. v. 9-12.

no longer keep back the love that is his due, and his enemies will despise him no more. A new wife, with the Bridegroom snatched away, and she left in poverty and reproach, herself despised, and reproaches heaped on him, might long for the time when her man shall return to vindicate himself before the world, and to change her lonely misery into wifely joy, but she has no more cause to hope for such a day than has the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the world. The coming of Jesus brings to that kingdom the end of all misery, and the fulness of all joy.⁵³ In suffering, in reproach, in darkness, in death, she remembers his loving promise, "I will see you again,"⁵⁴ and though her strength be almost gone, yet turns she her face yonderward, and cries, "Amen! come, Lord Jesus."⁵⁵

⁵³ Matt. xiii. 43.⁵⁴ John xvi. 22.⁵⁵ Rev. xxii. 20.

XIII.

THE FINAL GLORY.

"And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."—JOHN xvii. 5.

"Father, I desire that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me."—JOHN xvii. 24.

"I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God."—JOHN xx. 17.

WE have no source of information on this topic, except the revelation of God, and his revelation is by no means complete. For just as we have conceptions which it is impossible to express in the language of a Hottentot, so God has thoughts so great that human language can furnish no suitable vehicle for their expression. He has other thoughts which may be expressed truly, but inadequately, in the words which men have used. He who studies a word of this latter class will find that as he learns more the word can be made to hold

more, and all of God's meaning, which the original scope of the word could not embrace, must be packed into it by future use. Joy means one thing to the ignorant savage; the same word means much more to the educated Christian, and more still will it mean to the believer who is permitted to enter into the joy of his Lord. Any one, then, who endeavors to speak of those things which have been told us of the final glory is in danger of appearing both low and weak in the eyes of those who to-morrow shall know more. A true conception of what our Saviour believed is all that we hope for now. The conception will be fuller when we have lived with him longer.

Certainly Jesus did not believe this life to be the end of things for him. He was a believer in immortality,¹ and concerning himself —

I. He believed that he would be restored to his original station. Whatever of power and authority and glory belonged to him in the time before he came forth from the Father would come to him again.² His manhood would not interfere with this culmination; he,

¹ John xvi. 28.

² John xvii. 5.

a man, would come into his glory. What he had done in this stage of his being, so far from detracting from his honor, would in some definite points add glory to the ways in which he would manifest himself.³ How can we know what station is worthy of him until we know what station is worthy of God?⁴ Once two men appeared in glory upon the mountain top,⁵ and Jesus left the form in which it was proper to converse with common men, and took upon him a form in which it was proper to converse with them. This sight overwhelmed those who witnessed it; but God was still above the cloud,⁶ and Jesus is not to stop until he takes on him the very glory of the eternal God. "I ascend to my God and your God."⁷ He shall be seated on the right hand of that infinite Being.⁸ We do not know how great God's power and glory are, but we do know that this station of Jesus is the highest station there is. The second coming of Jesus is no sudden, temporary, blazing forth of his glory; it is the beginning of a manifestation that shall last.⁹

³ John v. 27.⁴ John v. 23.⁵ Matt. xvii. 1-8.⁶ Matt. xvii. 5.⁷ John xx. 17.⁸ Matt. xxvi. 64.⁹ Rev. xi. 15.

II. Jesus believed that his people would reach the place to which he has gone. They, being raised from the dead,¹⁰ purged of all evil,¹¹ and leaving behind those relations of life which have their use only in this world,¹² shall also ascend unto God and see the glory which he has given to his Son.¹³ All believers shall be there, without the loss of even one.¹⁴ God's original plan shall be accomplished for each.¹⁵ "They shall see God."¹⁶ They shall "shine forth as the sun."¹⁷

Of the glory of the place we can say but little other than that it is worthy of God. The material figures used in The Revelation — for that book is the revelation of Jesus concerning these things — show us the costliest things that we know put to very common uses. Pearls are put instead of wood for city gates, and gold instead of stones for paving the streets.¹⁸ How can we know anything of what is worthy for the nobler uses in that beautiful home? But these things are not intended to hold our attention. God and the Lamb are the crown and

¹⁰ John xi. 25.¹¹ Matt. xiii. 41.¹² Matt. xxii. 30.¹³ John xvii. 24.¹⁴ John xvii. 11, 12.¹⁵ Matt. xx. 23.¹⁶ Matt. v. 8.¹⁷ Matt. xiii. 43.¹⁸ Rev. xxi. 21.

centre of all glory to the believer.¹⁹ That would be a strange wife who thought more of a costly suit of furniture than she did of her husband; and in heaven there is one Being whose absence would cause the light to go out of every mansion and every heart. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you UNTO MYSELF; that where I am, there ye may be also."²⁰

As far as we can see, the most comprehensive term which Jesus uses to describe the sum of what he brings to men, or the sum of that into which men enter by him, is ETERNAL LIFE. This is by no means intended as merely adding an element of endlessness to the life which men already have; all men are in this sense immortal.²¹ "Eternal life," as Jesus used the term, describes something which is entirely absent from men, except as they have Jesus Christ.²² Men enter into it.²³ He is the life,²⁴ and having him, men have the life even now.²⁵ God gives it,²⁶ and God gave his Son that men might have it.²⁷ The expression is used inter-

¹⁹ Rev. xxi. 22, 23.²⁰ John xiv. 3.²¹ Matt. xxv. 46.²² John vi. 53, 54.²³ Matt. xix. 17.²⁴ John xiv. 6.²⁵ John vi. 47.²⁶ John v. 26; xvii. 2.²⁷ John iii. 16.

changeably with the words "kingdom of God,"²⁸ and the final joy of the redeemed is described as "going away into eternal life."²¹ In another passage it sums up what God has to give in the world to come to all who love him.²⁹ Add together the chief thing that Jesus brings to men in this world, and the crown of all gifts in the world to come, and that supreme joy or glory, as you please to view it, is ETERNAL LIFE.³⁰

But what is eternal life? We cannot rest, like children, in learning the name by rote. Can any one tell us what eternal life is? Jesus seems purposely to have given a definition: "This is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."³¹ But even in the presence of this definition we are at a stand, for certainly this can be no common form of knowledge. The object of knowledge is clearly stated — God, and Jesus, and his coming.³¹ And thus, even for the thing to be known, men are absolutely dependent upon Jesus.³² But there is also a strange

²⁸ Mark ix. 43, 47.

²¹ Matt. xxi. 46.

²⁹ Mark x. 30.

³⁰ John iii. 15, 16.

³¹ John xvii. 3.

³² Matt. xi. 27.

method of knowing which we must learn. It is not after the fashion that one might know a common fact, but it is an opening of the mind and soul to receive and to digest, not only the truth concerning God, but God himself.³³ Out of this sort of knowing spiritual life springs, and growth, and glory. The water of life,³⁴ the bread of life,³⁵ whether in Jesus, or as proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,³⁶ must be drunk, must be eaten. "Except ye eat ye have not life."³⁷ What can these figures mean, unless he intends to show that just as bread and water are related to the life and sustenance of the body, so he is related to the life and sustenance of the soul? Such knowledge of him here is eternal life.³⁸ Such increase of this knowledge as shall come with the perfect vision is eternal life above.³⁹

The glory of heaven, then, is a personal relation of the soul with God and Jesus. All other glory is but the bringing of all the accompaniments of life into harmony with that great fact. "I go to prepare a place for you." Where is

³³ Comp. John vi. 52-58; xvii. 3.

³⁴ John iv. 14.

³⁵ John vi. 51.

³⁶ Rev. xxii. 1.

³⁷ John vi. 53.

³⁸ John x. 27, 28.

³⁹ John xvii. 24.

it, Lord? "Ye know whither. I go to the Father." Which way is it, and how shall we reach it? "I am the way and the truth and the life."⁴⁰ He who has Jesus has God, and has all the rest.⁴¹ The rewards, and the recompense that are promised in return for suffering and for service here seem not to be material things. He who gives a dollar is not promised a hundred dollars on the other side, or any treasures of a similar kind. "He shall receive a hundredfold now in this time; and *in the world to come* ETERNAL LIFE."⁴² It is not those who give the greatest sums in this world that always have the largest inheritance in heaven.⁴³ We simply go out into the service of Jesus, and he who serves in such a way as to learn more of the Spirit of Jesus, and loves in such a way as more nearly to fill his heart with the person of Jesus, is rich toward God.⁴⁴ God has a thousand loving ways in which to pay a loving heart, for it is love, not pay, that the loving heart really seeks. Where Jesus is, is heaven, and the knowledge and love of Jesus make all the rewards of heaven.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ John xiv. 1-7.⁴¹ John xiv. 8-10.⁴² Mark x. 30.⁴³ Mark xii. 41-44.⁴⁴ Mark xix. 21; Luke xii. 33.

This gives us a fresh view of a very familiar saying: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last."⁴⁵ When man from his present station begins to think back through effect to cause till the first great cause is reached, the mind rests not until it finds God, the first cause — the first letter in the alphabet of existence. And then when Jesus comes to the task of showing us the thitherward end of human destiny, he lifts this veil and that, and, as the last goal of human thought and desire, names God, the Omega, the last letter of all our spelling. Fly onward, O my soul! And gathering strength through all thy onward flight, fly onward still. Know God, and knowing him, live.

Religion is personal union with God, and the perfected fruit of all religion is when the pure in heart shall see God.⁴⁶ "I would see Jesus;" what care I for the pearly gates, and the golden streets, except as for things which he has made? Jesus holds my heart. From seeing and knowing him spring eternal life and eternal joy.

⁴⁵ Rev. xxii. 13.

⁴⁶ Matt. v. 8.

“The bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear bridegroom’s face;
I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of grace;
Not at the crown he giveth,
But on his piercèd hand;
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Emmanuel’s land.”

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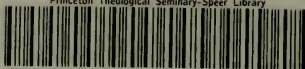
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